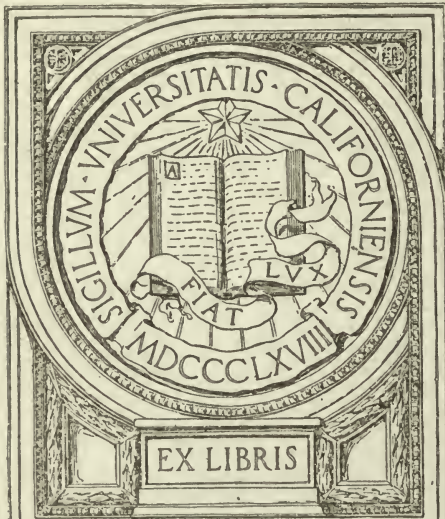


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CLAUDIO AND ANITA

THE
LAW OF
CALIFORNIA



DON FRANCISCO LOPEZ

Father of the author, who delighted to tell his children stories and romances of his youthful days, especially stories of his grandfather, Claudio Lopez (the hero of this story), some of which are included here.

CLAUDIO AND ANITA

*A Historical Romance
of San Gabriel's Early
Mission Days*

BY

MARIA S. LOPEZ de CUMMINGS



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Hearst Foundation

DEDICATION

TO DR. FRANCIS L. HAYNES

A MAN OF GENIUS WHOSE FIDELITY TO DUTY WAS HIS FOREMOST CHARACTERISTIC. IN TOKEN OF HIS NOBLE DEEDS, AND WITH GRATEFUL AND UNFADING MEMORIES, THIS LITTLE WORK IS AFFECTIONATLY DEDICATED. "HE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH."

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INTRODUCTORY

By JOHN STEVEN MCGROARTY, *Author of "The Mission Play."*

The pages of this book will tell a story of old San Gabriel. It is a true tale, and therefore the more alluring and fascinating because it is still the fact that "truth is stranger than fiction."

But it still remains true, also, that it is a high and great art to clothe truth in that shining garb which fiction has immemorially worn to attract lovers to her train. And you will find when you have read this story that Mrs. Cummings is a new master of that old art of clothing truth in fiction's shining garb.

San Gabriel is a place in the world about which romance clusters as the tendrils of a vine cluster upon an ancient wall. From the very beginning of the white man's occupation of California it was a busy and important place. It was the place where the fourth link of the chain of great Franciscan Missions in California was forged, and it's Mission came to be known as the "Queen of the Missions."

It was a great place indeed that San Gabriel came to be. In the Mission days it was noted for both it's great achievements and it's tireless hospitality. Travellers who made their names immortal entered it's sunny portals and were sheltered under it's rafters. The wanderer was fed at it's groaning boards—boards that groaned with plenty—

and were given rest in the peace and joy that dwelt so long under it's roof.

It is a place that Time has now changed out of all recognition of what once it was. And you will know this better when you have finished the last page of the fascinating story that is here written. Only the church remains of what was once the vast establishment of the Mission of San Gabriel.

Now, what Mrs. Cummings has done in the pages of this book, is to recreate for your imagination the San Gabriel that used to be in the old days that are gone by and passed away forever. As you read this story the hands of the clock of Time will be turned backward for you and you will have as your companions those who are now long since with the dust of places that they knew and loved. You will see what joys and what sorrows were theirs and how they lived and had their being.

It is the artist in literature alone who can accomplish a miracle like this. And Mrs. Cummings has done it first of all because in her childhood and youth she knew and loved the old San Gabriel of which she writes. And also it was a place that was well known to her fathers before her. And she writes with a charm that is the charm of memory.

Wherefore, to all who love a good story, and to everyone who love beauty, I commend this book.

PREFACE

Among the brave heroes, who sacrificed their lives to spread Christianity and civilization in the early settlement of this country, was our hero, Claudio Lopez y de la Mora. While yet in his early twenties, he left his elegant and cultured surroundings, in answer to the appeal of the missionaries for assistance in their work, at the ardent wish of his illustrious mother.

Though not of a religious order, he laboured among the Indians. How he taught them the industries and arts, as well as how to cultivate the land, and how he won their love, obedience and respect, has received but scant notice in the pages of history. Although the foundations of the mission church at San Gabriel, where he labored, were already laid, he supervised the erection of the church, and the mill (the first this side of the rockies) and of other minor buildings, in the construction of which a knowledge of architecture and engineering was required.

He was born of noble parents, in the north of Spain. His love for the wonderful beauties of nature, and a deep religious sentiment, gave his life that remarkable sweetness and beauty for which he was noted.

His unselfish and loving devotion to his work, coupled with great personal suffering and sorrow, is a lesson fraught with meaning for men who

suffer, yet work and hope for better things. He spent most of his spare moments in writing, and, it is believed, that he wrote his memoirs, which, unfortunately, were destroyed by fire, together with other valuable documents, the day of his sudden death. It would have given great pleasure to have seen and read his manuscripts, but, since it has been ordained otherwise, we submit to the inevitable.

In the Mission Church of San Gabriel is the tomb of our hero, Claudio Lopez y de la Mora.

I am indebted to my sister, Mrs. Francisca Lopez de Bilderain, for the valuable research work and information which has aided me in this work. I hereby return to her my warmest thanks.

THE AUTHOR.

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"A ship! A ship!" exclaimed Father Salvidea.

CHAPTER I.

THE COMING OF THE HERO



ASHIP! A ship!" exclaimed Father Salvidea.

"It may be just the spray of a high wave," said Father Juan, the resident priest of San Diego who, in company with Father Salvidea of Mission San Gabriel, had been anxiously looking for a sight of the long-expected ship.

Yet, as Father Juan spoke, a ship was sighted, its long, graceful body and gleaming white sails vaguely outlined against a radiantly glowing sky. It was just a modest vessel, but it rolled majestically into port, bathed in the subdued flashes of the setting sun.

It was a beautiful spring day in April. The rays of the setting sun were shedding their golden mantle over old Pacific, while all Nature, in primitive and majestic beauty, gave welcome to the heroes who were to serve in further developing and beautifying the country.

The countenances of both Fathers Salvidea and Juan beamed with delight, as they welcomed the noble heroes, Juan and Claudio Lopez, who had come in response to Father Salvidea's appeal to the mother country for two young men, physically

strong and capable, who would assist him in his mission work, and who would co-operate with him and help him carry out his plans in the gigantic task before him. The young men, in return, courteously paid homage to the fathers. Father Salvidea was immediately impressed with Claudio's distinguished bearing, and he selected him as his assistant. Juan, remaining in San Diego, was to assist Father Juan.

Claudio, loving the pleasures of life and realizing what it meant to be deprived of associates and home, and having abandoned a career he had planned for himself, was reluctant in responding to the call. It was then that his illustrious mother appealed to his better nature, bringing before him his duty to the heroic work that would immortalize his name through all time, and, moreover, would perpetuate the glory of Spain. So, inspired by her fervent prayer, he accepted the task that came into his life. It was then that the most sacred and dearest ties were rent asunder. Was the sacrifice worthy of the cause?

Claudio, with Father Salvidea, proceeded to San Gabriel. When he reached the mission and surveyed the wild country and realized the enormous task that was before him, and contrasted the surroundings with the scenes of his distant and palatial home, it was not to be wondered, that he became disheartened, discouraged and rebellious,

and longed to return. Father Salvidea well knew where his thoughts and heart were. So, sitting beside him, with kind and encouraging words, he presented to him the noble duty that fell to his lot as a soldier of the church and the king. "My son," pleaded he, "accept the honor that is given thee."

While the father was thus speaking the moon rose, forming glowing shadows around the court where Claudio's bed had been placed. The father said the fresh air would benefit him. How sad he felt, so far away from his family and friends. And those grim shadows! were they phantoms, warning him? What was that one, obscuring the center of the court? Oh, it was only the shadow of the big cross over the eastern door. Nevertheless, that one especially, impressed him immensely; it filled his heart with sad forebodings and increased his home yearnings threefold. Would his cross be as heavy as that one lying near him? Undoubtedly it seemed ominous.

"What good," thought Claudio, "will all my studies and vigil do me here? Why did I consent to mother's wishes? Are all plans of life come to an end in this utterly desolate place?"

"Why has the strand been snapped when my career was reaching its height?"

"Why have I been called upon to make this dedication of myself to an obscure ideal? This is a new world, I was told, and I was to assist in

the building up of a great human work for my king, christianity and civilization. This is a new career open to me; but I never can see anything but desolation. Will I live and die in this far-off land,—I a descendant of a great warrior, Juan Lopez, Duke de Medina? I have left my home, the center of elegance and intelligence to plunge into this wild adventure. I want none of it, only the certitude of joy, service and beauty, gardens, flowers and music, art and the refinements of life. I was more eager for pleasure than for glory. I will go back to the old world, my world. Surely some one can be found more fitted than myself for this work!"

Thus were his thoughts like lead hammers on his heart; but, weary from the long ride from San Diego, he fell into a deep sleep.

The following morning broke warm and brilliant. The sun was just peeping over the snow-capped tops of the San Antonio mountains, when Claudio opened his eyes slowly, as if afraid to look on the horrid shadows of the night before, but was surprised when he saw the most beautiful morning that ever greeted mortal eyes. Everything combined to make the scene cheerful. The slender jasmine twigs and many flowers were gracefully yielding to the gentle mountain breeze, impregnating the air with delicious aroma. The mocking-birds were enthusiastic with their ma-

tutinal songs. A pair of white pigeons was cooing under one of the belfry arches, exactly beneath the historic silver bell. Involuntarily his eyes turned to the center of the court. The sunbeams were there, softly kissing the very spot where the heavy cross lay the night before.

He sat on the edge of the bed, with his face buried in both hands, and his elbows resting on his knees; and, in deep thought, fell into a trance-like state in which a new world unfolded before him with a vision of a scene in which his life and heart would form a part.

CLAUDIO'S VISION


The sun now shining over the San Gabriel mountain peaks throwing its rays over the frozen dew drops of the mountain trees and wild flowers, caused them to sparkle and flash like gems with the iridescent colors of the opal. In the midst of this magnificent scene a vision, a spirit of beauty, met his sight. In a cove of the wood-crowned hills, he saw a beautiful maiden, delicate as a lily, and nymph-like in form; but she looked strangely and tragically sad. Her eyes were large, and blue, yet they were full of sadness. Her mouth had the sweet curves and redness of youth, but it showed an expression of bitterness and anguish, as of deep moral suffering. Her face was flushed, and her bosom rose and fell as in great excitement. On the golden-brown waves of

her hair which, like a tiara, rested on her lovely brow, a white embroidered crepe shawl was fastened to an elaborate coiffure with a spray of orange blossoms. The shawl fell over her arms and partly covered them, but her throat and chest were bare. Her white satin dress fell in soft folds around her graceful figure while white satin slippers covered her dainty feet. To Claudio, it looked like a heavenly scene. At sight of him, the maiden's face glowed with hope and, with a look full of entreaty, she sprang lightly forward with arms extended toward him. Then the vision swiftly faded. Claudio awoke, thrilled with delight. To him it looked as if angels had lifted the veil which hid the future.



CHAPTER II.

THE FEAST OF THE HOLY CROSS AND ANITA

N unseen hand seemed to have waved a wand, transforming him, giving him a complete change of heart and a sense of joy.

Raising his head suddenly he saw Father Salvidea standing before him. He arose and, impulsively taking Father Salvidea's hand, reverently touched it with his lips and told him that he was ready to take up the work assigned to him. The Father, rejoicing at the change which had come

over Claudio, gently touched him on the shoulder and said:

"I am glad of your decision, my son, and feel that a great load has been lifted off my shoulders; for I know that I will have an energetic and congenial assistant through the arduous work I have undertaken."

The father selected a bright and comely youth for Claudio's attendant, and told him to wait upon Senor Lopez, and serve him his breakfast. With light, buoyant steps, Claudio walked to his quarters, which were dull, but spacious, and at another time would have depressed him. While the page went to fetch his chocolate and marquesote, he stepped out into the open. Recalling his dream, he drew a long breath and looked towards the mountains. How strange! They no longer seem to him grim jailors, but fascinating companions. Every rebellious thought which had been in his heart when he arrived in the mission, and all longing to return home, had left him after the sight of that mystical something.

It is possible that Claudio's sudden change of heart had resulted from the vision dream. However, all sadness had left his mind, and the sense of a new emotion gave his existence a novel charm, awakening a mysterious joy within him. Plans were made for his survey of the surrounding country the following morning, the trip to be

made on horseback, and he to be accompanied by one or more servants.

Although a foundation had been laid at the mission, it was through Father Salvidea's administration that the Mission San Gabriel attained its maximum of prosperity. Father Salvidea was gifted with a powerful and masterful mind, investing his outward appearance with a spiritual grandeur, a striking dignity that made one, for the moment, awed in his presence; yet, there was a courteous friendliness in his manner. Though possessed of talents and eloquence by which he could have attained high honors in his native land, he devoted his life to the upbuilding of the country within his domain; and to christianizing and civilizing savage Indians. His beneficence was great, for he not only fed the hungry wanderer and gave him a clean bed, but dispatched him, accompanied by a servant, to the next mission, with bread and meat in his wallet. Father Salvidea was, indeed, one of those remarkable men who so frequently spring up among the religious orders of the Church, and to whose outward simplicity are united immense energy and great power of mind. His perfect life made people speak of him as they would of a saint,—with love and reverence. It was told of him, that he actually performed miracles.

As had been planned, Claudio and a servant rode out the following morning to view the surrounding country. He became fascinated with the panorama. The grandeur of the lofty mountains, towering above the sloping hills carpeted with innumerable flowers, all massed together in living colors of pink, white and blue, and poppies, which lit their flanks with a golden hue, especially attracted him, while the clear, sweet air, with mingled perfume of flowers, charmed his senses. Moreover, to his great surprise, he saw here and there some well-kept ranch-houses, of home-like appearance, their front yards swept clean as a floor.

Upon his return to the mission, he related to Father Salvidea what he had seen. The father then told him that at one of the ranch-houses, named *La Rosa de Castilla*, lived a Spanish gentleman, with his wife and only daughter, Anita. Next week, on the second of May,—that being the Feast of the Holy Cross (*La Santa Cruz*),—there was to be a gathering at *La Rosa de Castilla* of the surrounding ranchers to celebrate the day. It was the custom to gather wild flowers to decorate the cross, and the young people vied with each other to excel in the beauty of the decorations. Moreover, Father Salvidea said that he himself had to go to the senor's house to conduct a simple service connected with the day. He wished Clau-

dio to accompany him, in order to make him acquainted with the senor and his family.

On the appointed day, both Father Salvidea and Claudio made their way toward *La Rosa de Castilla*, and on approaching the house were met by the senor, the father introducing Claudio. The senor at once recognized in him a noble son of Spain, and knew his worth. Claudio was a handsome fellow, tall, well built, with an air of hauteur notwithstanding a great charm of manner, light-brown hair, fair complexion, and large gray eyes full of fire. Highly accomplished in the arts and sciences, his early reputation of skill as a fencer and equestrian constituted minor distinctions to his growing renown as a writer. His athletic training had made him quick in action and as strong and supple as a young panther. His bearing was manly and bold, notwithstanding his reserved manner. The whole mien of Claudio bore, in a word, that indescribable stamp of distinction that seems to be the peculiar quality and exclusive privilege of aristocratic families.

Father Salvidea spoke of Claudio's mission, and of the works and improvements needed, which soon would be under way. The senor became very much interested, and offered Claudio the hospitality of his house as a resting-place in his rounds in the mission work. The house was indeed an ideal place for rest, with its wide veranda extend-

ing eighty feet. The posts were overgrown with the passion and other vines, trained to represent arches. The walls of the building surrounded a large and beautiful court yard. Long windows, broken only by the entrance arch, opened on the four sides of the veranda. The quadrangle was a maze of foliage and blossoms. A fountain played in the center. A profusion of flowers, Castilian roses, jasmine, marigolds and other flowers grew there. The gleam of golden oranges and the paler yellow sweet lime hung amid the glossy foliage. The very air was intoxicating with the fragrance of the flowers.


Already the young people, sons and daughters of the few families who had come with the missionaries,—those from far and near had arrived for the afternoon function of the Holy Cross; but their young hostess, Anita, was not among them, for she had been since early morning, together with her duenna, among the hills, gathering flowers for the fete. Suddenly Anita, with flushed and animated face sparkling with joy, her arms loaded with flowers and ferns, rode into the courtyard, leaped with nymph-like grace from her saddle, deposited the flowers on a table, and greeted the young girls who flocked around her with an embrace. Senor Cota, with Father Salvidea and Claudio, approached the happy crowd and in a caressing tone called, "*Anita, vida mia,*

ven aca!” and introduced Claudio. With courtly mien the latter bowed and, with a start, eagerly looked into the beautiful girl’s eyes. Confused, and in doubt, he thought, “Where, where have I seen that face?” Anita’s eyes lowered. Again their eyes met, and unconsciously they were held by exchanged glances. Then each read in the other’s eyes the mutual understanding of a love that comes from soul to soul at first sight, little realizing the pangs and heart-rending scenes that love would bring into their lives.



CHAPTER III.

CLAUDIO AND ANITA PLEDGE THEIR TROTH

T the end of a year, much had been done toward improving conditions around San Gabriel Mission. The flour-mill was well under construction, and the aqueduct which was to furnish water to operate the mill was completed. The wheat fields in the valley, the corn fields, the vegetable gardens adjacent to the mission, all bore eloquent evidence of what had been accomplished within the year. Under Claudio’s stern, but considerate management all was progressing satisfactorily. So matters crept along. Claudio had declared his love to Anita, but both

kept the secret within their hearts, something making them conscious of a fate that might part them.

It was a year later, again the first of May, the day before the Feast of the Holy Cross. The young people and their duennas had met at a cove in the hills, and, having agreed to meet there again before starting for home, had separated, to gather their flowers on the sloping hills. It was late in the afternoon. The lights of the setting sun on the Pacific appeared like flaming gold. Snow-capped San Antonio made a background of topaz, and threw a shade of amethyst on the surrounding peaks. These, together with the sun-kissed hills, made a great contrast to the emerald-shaded valley below. Such was the appearance of the landscape from that beautiful spot. Claudio and Anita stood enraptured at the magnificent panorama.

Suddenly Claudio looked around with a start. Where were the others? No one was in sight. "We must hasten to the rendezvous," he said. The shadows began to deepen, but the atmosphere was so clear that myriads of stars could be discerned shining into limitless space. A bright moon began to silver the tips of the trees. Nature exhaled a poetic splendor, and all things seemed to intone a hymn to the Creator with that silent music heard only by the spirit. The mission bells were ringing the Angelus, and their silvery chimes echoed

through the trees like the trill of a bird. Claudio uncovered and lowered his head, and he and Anita repeated, with profound devotion, the Angelus. Finishing the prayer, they hurried on, passing through the most enchanting scenery. Majestic oaks stood by the crystal waters, countless numbers of glow-worms shone like diamonds among the grass and wild flowers, and wild roses without number perfumed the air with their rich fragrance.

Claudio walked on in silence, the beauty of the place and the constant sight of the lovely girl who moved by his side, making his heart thrill, and he felt himself swayed and vanquished by the voluptuousness of Nature in those favored regions. For was not this marvelously beautiful and princely domain his own? The king's grant to these lands had just the day before been given him, in recompense for his faithful services to the mission and the king. Hastening on, Claudio and Anita finally reached the rendezvous, but found no one there.

"They must have lost their way," said Anita. "We will wait just a little while, and, if they do not come, I will take thee home," said Claudio, gravely.

"No, no," said Anita, "I will sing. My voice will echo through the mountain, and we will build a fire and let it flame up as a signal to them."

They built the fire, then, and both found a seat on a log near by. Anita had been very quiet, but now she burst forth in one of her frolicsome moods. Looking up at the sky, she said: "The moon is shining bright; let us dance while they come."

"My little wild flower," said Claudio, with an amused smile, "I cannot dance."

"Oh, it is easy, see," and she held the front of her dress with both hands, just displaying her pretty feet, and with the utmost grace glided back and forth, bending and swaying; yet she could have balanced a glass of water on her head without spilling a drop.

Suddenly she stopped dancing, and coming to where Claudio was sitting, encircled his arm with her hands. Anita's moods changed rapidly from a frolicsome spirit to a pensiveness which gave softness to her manner and added charm to her beauty. But fascinating as was her personality, it was the varied expression of her countenance, as her moods changed, that threw such a captivating charm around her. With a sad expression on her upturned face, she questioned, "I wonder what the world will be a hundred years from now? Our world, here on the coast," she said, with emphasis.

"I will tell thee, *cara mia*, while thou art in a serious mood," said Claudio, taking up Anita's shawl and fastening it gently under her chin, say-

ing, at the same time, that the dew was falling and was making the air chilly.

“Anita, dearest,” he repeated, “thou knowest my mission here, the work I was called into this land to do in co-operation with our most saintly Father Salvidea. Myself and others will make this favored spot of California, ‘our world’, as thou sayest, as beautiful as the far-famed Atlantis. We will build roads to reach its echanting nooks and commercial ports; we will till the soil, plant trees and flowers; we will build lakes and fountains, whose shimmering and sparkling waters will reflect the choicest of flowers and fruits from all climes; we will dazzle the world with its grandeur! Brave and zealous heroes, in the name of civilization and christianity, have laid its foundation; we will build it up in splendor!”

He was tense with energy and emotion. With a quick glance over the sloping valley, he continued, “Our flag shall ride the seas, far out to our mother-land, illustrious Spain, proclaiming to her that we have made this privileged spot ready for her sons,—yea, for her adopted sons also! A generation will rise, and send world-wide praises of the deeds of her brave heroes who first raised the cross, emblem of Christianity, on this coast, and taught the savages to bend the knee before the Holy Cross in reverence to the Divine Being. Peoples from the four corners of the world shall min-

gle in friendly communion, and spires and domes shall pierce the clouds, a hundred years from now!"

Anita was awed at Claudio's outburst of emotion, and exclaimed, "Claudio, Claudio, what art thou saying?" "Giving vent to the yearnings and ambitions of my heart, dearest," he answered, "also communicating to you the vision I have had of this blessed land. I cannot find words to speak my soul's delight; but with thee by my side I will work incessantly to make this spot worthy of the name I will give it. I am confident of success. All will be dedicated to thee, my love, and on the happy day when I shall call thee my own, then thou wilt be mistress of this beautiful spot."

Taking hold of both her little hands, he touched them with his lips, continuing, "Anita, wilt thou consent to be my wife in six months from now? We expect the mission ship, in which our household goods are coming, also some family jewels, to arrive in three months. As thou knowest, I am the eldest of my two brothers. Wilt thou promise me? My love for thee, sweetheart, is as pure as the snow on yonder peak. For thee, I would give my life many times over. Little one, look up and answer me,—tell me thou lovest me."


With both hands encircling his arm, the slender girl lifted her face toward his and said, "I love thee, Claudio. In this life and after death my

love will still abide, and I promise to be thy wife in six months from now, with my parents' consent." In that radiant uplifted face, young Claudio saw that her words had come from the inner recesses of her heart.

"A kiss, my beloved," he cried, "to bind this immortal love." She did not move, but looked straight into his eyes, with trustful consent. He took the beloved face in both his hands, and gently pressed her soft lips with his as a sacred seal of their solemn vows. The twilight pervaded the surrounding hills, the air, which had been still, rang with bird music, bursting around them from thicket, trees and glades, in heavenly trills, sweet and rare. Just then, as dusk was enveloping the valley, they heard the voices of their companions, nearing; Soila, Anita's duenna, calling out louder than the others. When she came near, she threw her arms around Anita, crying hysterically with joy, as Anita and Claudio had been lost for some time, and their companions had been frantically calling and searching for them.

CHAPTER IV.

“A SATAN INCARNATE WORKS HIS WILES”

HE Mission San Gabriel was now a marvel of beauty and order. Large vineyards had been planted, intersected with fine walks, shaded by fruit trees of every description, and rendered still more lovely by shrubbery. The aqueduct and mill were built. Hedges of rose-bushes were planted, trees were growing in the mission square, with a flower garden and an hour-dial in the center. Father Salvidea also remodeled the existent system of government.* Every article must henceforth be in place and every man at his station. The people had been divided into classes, according to their vocations. Large shops had been created for the trades, and also large spinning-rooms, where might be seen some sixty women merrily turning their spindles. Then large storerooms were allotted to the various articles, which were kept separate. Sugar-cane, flax and hemp were added to the articles being cultivated, but cotton and wool were imported.

A principal head, majordomo, commanded and superintended over all. Claudio Lopez was the famed one during Father Salvidea's administration; and, although executing the priest's plans, in

the minds of the people he was the real hero. Ask anyone to this day who did this, or made that, and the answer on all sides is the same: "*El difunto Claudio.*" And great credit was his for carrying out the numerous works under his supervision without flogging.

There were a great many other majordomos under him for all kinds of work, from the keepers of the aquariums to the superintendency of crops, vineyards and gardens. The best looking youths were kept as pages; those of most musical talent were reserved for church service. The unmarried women and girls were kept as nuns under the supervision of an abbess, who slept with them in a large room; their occupations were various; in fact, they had no trade in particular.

During his pastorate, Father Salvidea mastered the Indian language and reduced it to grammatical rules, being the first father in this section to undertake such a task. He translated the church service, and preached to the Indians each Sabbath in their native tongue.

In the meantime, Don Mishel, a Frenchman of polished manner and handsome bearing, had seen the happy and frolicsome Anita and fell desperately in love with her. Who this man was, no one pretended to know, or at least asserted with positiveness. It was whispered, however, that he was

one of La Perouse's company of scientificos, that were exploring the Coast in the interest of the French government, and who, with seven others, escaped in a boat from one of the explorer's ships and, on landing, were attacked by the Indians, he alone escaping death.

However, there was a deep mystery about this man who, wherever he went, created a sensation, by his appearance and manner. His mien, in general, was simple, yet he was capable of deceiving the most clever lawyer.

How to penetrate the family circle was a problem he had to face; but he would master the situation; he would gain his heart's desire. But first of all, Claudio must get out of his way, so straightaway he set himself into finding some accusation he might bring against the mission government and thereby incite the people into making a complaint that would necessitate a courier being sent to the governor. Such a duty, he knew, would fall to Claudio.

Being a man of pleasing manner and address, he in the most subtle way went about gaining the confidence of the better families, and, to better obtain his object, assumed the great prerogative of defending their rights. Claiming to espouse their cause, he told them the padres of San Gabriel had dammed up the river, thus cutting off their supply

* Warner's History of Los Angeles County.

of water; that the padres refused to attend to the spiritual needs of their sick, and spent too much of their time, with their pleasure-loving major-domo, in feasting and entertaining; also, that the neophytes were made to work like beasts, and were flogged most brutally. These and similar complaints were written out and signed by the majority of the people, and dispatched to the governor. In due time a courier arrived at the mission, bringing with him the papers concerning these accusations, and demanding an explanation.

Father Salvidea often went to solitary parts of the mountains, partly to divert his thoughts by the sublime aspect of Nature, and to strengthen himself by prayer and meditation. After one of these rambles, and, as he approached the mission, the servant waiting at the gate gave him the packet which had been sent by the governor. This he opened, and was dumfounded by its contents. Almost senseless, he dropped the preposterous letters, but soon recovered himself, picked them up, and went to his cell to read them more calmly.

Father Salvidea, who had a masterful way of going about things and was usually calm during stress, immediately summoned Claudio, but on this occasion Claudio could see plainly that the father was worried,—a circumstance very unusual with him,—as he related what had happened. He told Claudio he realized the fact that someone was

endeavoring to make them tools for the accomplishment of an ambition or device.

"No doubt, father," said Claudio, "someone is jealous of our success, and would upset our glorious plans; but," he continued, "I doubt not the matter can be explained satisfactorily to the governor,"—as he (Claudio) had not heard of any complaints among the neophytes, nor any irregularities whatever. The neophytes were docile, obedient, and worked cheerfully and well. The mill would soon be ready to turn out flour, and the people were happy in anticipation of its completion, as it would furnish work to the idle men.

"That is well, my son," said Father Salvidea. "But of this trouble! Thou canst never tell what little cloud of dissention may turn into a roaring tempest." Not until sometime afterwards did Claudio remember the words of the father,—not until that little cloud became a full-fledged thunderstorm.

"Peace and order have been well kept," said the father, "but despite all these, trouble-makers are trying to make disturbance, whatever their motive. But, Claudio," he continued, "thou wilt realize that there is greater seriousness at the bottom of this than mere complaint. 'Tis a hellish plot! The work of a satan incarnate that is working his wiles among the people. He shall be

thwarted in his purpose!" and father Salvidea stood up, and brought his fist down upon the table.

After that he became calmer, and turning to Claudio continued: "My son, thou must take this matter before the governor. No one could do it in a more fitting manner. It will take some weeks, it is true, but with God's help the work will go on well while thou art away. I will get the answer to the charges ready. Start tomorrow morning. I have sent a messenger to Port San Pedro. The ship will be ready to take to sea by tomorrow evening."

A sense of impending trouble weighed upon Claudio's spirit, but he could offer no excuse; besides, he must obey orders. Taking leave of Father Salvidea, and, with his blessing, he left to make ready for his journey. He soon made his way to the *Rosa de Castilla*, to take leave of Senor and Senora Cota and, what was uppermost in his heart, to see Anita and renew their vows.

As he took leave of her parents, Anita followed him out to the court garden. "Must you go, *caro mio*?" asked Anita.

"I must," replied Claudio; "it is my duty. And thy love, Anita, the sweetest, the tenderest, that ever ennobled the heart of man, will put strength into me for the arduous task that is before me."

Grasping both her hands in his, he pressed them

to his heart; his arms went around her, and with her head leaning against his breast, he said: "Anita, swear again you will be faithful to me!" "I am thine, now, and forever!" she pledged, as she raised her lovely eyes to his, and the radiance of her beautiful face was reflected in the moon-touched crown of her golden hair, making a picture that forever was engraved upon her lover's heart.

Back in his apartment, Claudio gave his attendant, Gregorio, directions for packing the gold-fringed cloak, the embroidered waistcoat, the slippers, and the garters. "I must make a fitting appearance before the governor," he mused.

The faint color of dawn was showing in the eastern sky, when he was up, and ready for his journey.

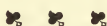
Claudio ordered his horse brought around,—a spirited chestnut bay, Retinto, that arched its neck proudly when its master mounted, but would permit no other living being upon its back. He examined the bridle and the saddle, ordered the girth tightened, and, swinging into his saddle, drove Retinto into a fast speed toward the mill, his attendant and groom following. At the upper end of the reservoir he reined in his horse to examine the lower banks and outlets of the dam, and, seeing that everything was in perfect condition, turned towards his destination.

The rode through a forest of lordly oaks, along the foot of the mountains,—these were within the lines of his grant,—and passed out into the open. The sun had just risen over the mountain tops, deluging and dazzling the valley with its beams, and reflecting its rosy light upon the little lakes in the coves of the hills, which were bordered with white and the blue forget-me-nots. The gentle slopes over which they rode appeared as a gorgeous wild-flower garden,—asters, yellow and white, blue larkspurs, monk's hoods, lupines, white and blue, alder, wild lilac (*la concha del agua*, this the natives used to ward off fevers, a few stalks thrown in the olla of drinking water making it as bitter as quinine), the golden poppy and white sage, all in riotous flowering.

Claudio took off his hat, and the delicious air, fragrant from myriads of blossoms, played through his hair. The beams of the rising sun, now subdued, fell over the valley, its tints growing softer and blending more and more in the distance, until they melted into a soft, blue-lilac haze. It was a magic scene, one to which the pen can not do justice,—the mountains, towering supremely grand, beneath, a glimpse of Paradise, and beyond, a rolling country, mostly tulle, but lush with alfilaria (pin grass), which afforded abundant feed for the herds of cattle.

The sun was yet young in the sky when the

riders passed through *El Pueblo de Nuestra Senora de Los Angeles*. Then they came to great fields of blossoming mustard, over which the shining sun cast a yellow tint. Among the mustard were big patches of ripe blackberries, and here the travelers stopped, to refresh themselves with the luscious fruit. Continuing, they reached the *embarcadero* before sundown, and Claudio, with his attendant, immediately made his way to the ship, the groom returning to the mission with the horses.



CHAPTER V.

OUTLAWS PLY THEIR NEFARIOUS VOCATION



AGAIN it is sun up, and the Alba is ringing, Father Salvidea, being charged with mission duties, which claim entirely his becalmed energies. Again he officiates at the holy altar. The mission is filled with worshippers. The holy candles, yellowing in the sunlight, glow preternatural light which, reflecting on stately walls and the holy altar, reveals statues, pictures, carvings, sacred vessels, and gorgeous vestments,—old masterpieces from Catholic Europe. In the midst of this hallowed, beautiful place, the worshipers are kneeling, absorbed, heart, mind and soul, in the solemn mass.

After mass, all breakfast. Then the vast army of Indians, learning various trades, crafts and arts, swarm into the workshops or foundaries. The great *patio* is filled with hundreds of singing women and girls weaving, spinning or carding wool, while a large number of men and boys ride away on horseback to the cattle ranches, sheep ranges and wine presses, or to the grain fields, gardens and orchards of the mission itself and the mission ranches adjacent; a favored people, well on the way to realizing the joy and the power of creating all the necessities for a comfortable living. By these means, the Indians were individually awakened, for the first time, to civilizing and cultural influences.

Shortly after Claudio's departure on his mission, Anita's father met with a heavy loss through the defalcation of a neighbor, a foreigner for whom he had gone security. Matters went from bad to worse and to such an extent that he was given so many days in which to give up his home. Don Mishel's opportunity had come sooner than he had expected.

On the eve of the family's evacuation, when all were in despair, the Frenchman called to offer Senor Cota his assistance, at the same time predicting that in the natural course of events the foreigners, through fraud and trick, would soon come into possession of all the land. He offered

the senor his note for ten thousand dollars; he (Cota), in return, to transfer to him (Mishel), his lands, stock and home, as he (Mishel) would be better able to cope with the situation, and promised the senor to return the deeds when conditions became more settled, and the senor could then return his note. His mind laboring under the strained condition of the shock, Senor Cota readily accepted the offer. After this, the Frenchman's wealth increased rapidly, while the senor continued to meet with serious financial losses.

Thirty miles away, in the deep recesses of the mountains, in a deep, high-walled valley, a band of robbers were eating their supper around a camp-fire. Their horses, all saddled, ready for a hasty departure, were tied a short distance away. A fearless horseman was riding towards them with great speed. Breasting the dizzy cliffs over the treacherous boulders, scaling precipitous ravines, his horse sliding over the almost perpendicular sides, he soon approached the camp. All arose and hailed their chief, who at once fell into earnest conversation with the captain of the band, Sepulveda, saying:

"Take the speediest horse in the band, ride like the wind; burn the ranch-house of old Cota, and return there by daybreak,—100 miles in ten hours!"

Sepulveda at once started on his wild ride. He

plied *cuarta* and spur, and urged his horse on and on, through canyons and mountain trails. As he approached the ranch-house his horse fell dead at the very threshold, but he left the house in ashes.

Walking six miles to a neighboring ranch, he got a fresh horse, returned to the robbers' camp as ordered, and reported to his chief. Giving directions for the next move, the chief waved his hand to his men, and rode away in another direction.

On the front porch of one of the neat ranch-houses which dotted the foothills of Santa Susana, sat Dona Maria, deftly working some fancy stitches on a child's woolen dress. Three persons, two men and a woman, rode up. They asked if her husband was at home, and were told that her husband was down in the field, but would come home at supper-time. They then brought out a map, spread it on the table, and asked if she could locate for them a certain canyon. She could plainly see by the spot marked on the map that the canyon was back of the house, not far up the hill. They then told her that a relative of theirs, who had died in Paris, left them the map, telling them that a rich treasure was buried there (pointing to the mark on the map); that if her husband would take them to the spot, and help them dig the treasure, they would give him a share. They were the legal heirs, they said.

Dona Maria invited them to come in and rest

until her husband came home, when they all could have supper. She ordered the cook to kill two chickens, which were prepared with rice, a favorite Spanish dish. When her husband came, supper was served. All ate hurriedly, and were soon ready to go and dig up the treasure. The woman of the party asked Dona Maria to accompany them, but she replied that she would, after arranging the china and putting her children to bed.

While busy with her china, something very strange happened: she heard a great rush of wind, and a voice close to her said, "*Cuidado, cuidado.*" Looking around, she saw no one, but the incident was repeated three times, and each time the voice was more audible.

Becoming frightened, and believing that some supernatural power was warning her, her first thought, mother-like, was of her children. She rushed to their bed, and with the dishcloth still grasped tightly in her hands, knelt by their side, and in a loud voice implored Heaven to protect her and her children.

While in this attitude, Dona Maria heard a loud noise, as of a band of horses coming down the canyon. As it drew nearer, she turned, and saw her husband and the foreigners, their faces blanched with terror. In gasping words they told her that something terrible had happened. As their tools struck a hard substance, the sound of precious

metal came distinctly to their ears. Strange whisperings and mutterings became audible; these gradually passed into groans and shrieks and other diabolical sounds; but the chief place of commotion was under the ground, just under the boxes that contained the treasure. Then came a rush of wind that swept along with terrific force, whistling and howling, bending the branches of the trees above them, then rushing through the grounds, raising great clouds of dust and gravel, striking them on the eyes, almost blinding them. At the same time they heard a rumbling sound as of thunder which seemed to sink into the very earth, and through the blackness of the night and uproar, the sound of voices, as if coming from the ground beneath their feet, pierced into their ears, saying: "The penalty of death to those who disturb this treasure. Beware! Beware!" In terror the men dropped their tools, grabbed their coats and ran toward the house at great speed, soundly frightened. The foreigners left that same night saying: "No treasure, however rich, would make us go through that experience again. Let the devil keep the treasure."

(Author's Note—These gusts of wind and the unearthly voices were made with an instrument of the operator's own invention, he being an alchemist as well as a ventriloquist.)

CHAPTER VI.

“MY WORD, IT CANNOT BE RECALLED”

TWO or three days after this, Dona Maria, as usual, was sitting on the porch, sewing. Don Mischel rode up, and with a smirking smile asked how much of the treasure her husband had received from the foreigners as his share for his work. She related to him what had happened.

“Well, well,” he said, “those foreigners are much too smart for any of us. They came back during the night and carried off the treasure, and beat Manuel out of his share. Go to the place and see.”

She went, and saw two empty boxes, such as held one hundred one-pound bars of soap. On one was stamped, “50-dollar gold pieces,” and on the other, “silver dollars.” The marks on the boxes showed they had been filled to the top.

When Don Mishel returned to San Gabriel, he found the little town in a state of great excitement. He was told that Senor Cota had received bad news; that his ranch-house had been burned to the ground with all the treasures he had stored therein, and that he had collapsed on hearing it, for his loss was irreparable.

Don Mishel knew his chance had now come to bring the matter uppermost in his mind to an

issue. So he immediately called to offer Senor and Senora Cota his condolence. He found them both crushed by the enormous loss of their priceless treasures, among them paintings from the masters.

Having spied on Claudio's and Anita's movements; therefore, knowing of their love-meetings, he realized he must lose no time in pressing the subject next his heart. After offering both comforting words, he took advantage of their situation and asked for Anita's hand in marriage. He told her parents of his wealth, and what that wealth could do in giving their daughter comforts.

In their hearts, Senor and Senora Cota did not approve of Anita's marriage to Don Mishel; yet, when they thought of her future and the privations to which poverty would subject their adored child, and also, their spirits being broken by misfortune, they gave their consent at the end of the interview, and Don Mishel, his face beaming with joy, retired. His heart's desire had come, even sooner than he had dared to hope.

Anita was sitting on the branch of an orange tree, feeding a nest of young mocking-birds and looking nymph-like in her beauty when a servant approached and said her parents wished to speak to her. She went in, saying, "Here is your *chiquita*." Her father, looking gravely at her, told

her that both her mother and himself had promised her in marriage to Don Mishel.

Anita stood, for a moment, as if stunned by a heavy blow. The poor child became perfectly white, and her eyes were fixed on space and as rigid as those of the dead. Recovering, she flew to her mother's arms, and resting her face upon her breast, with heart-rending cries moaned, "*Mamasita*, it will break my heart!"

Tears filled both parents eyes, as they witnessed the cruel agitation through which their beloved child was passing, but both were obdurate, and told her they had given their promise.

Anita, casting a timorous and appealing glance at her father, said, "Father, undo thy promise."

In a stern voice he replied. "Anita, why this scene, those tears, that rigor?"

"Thy sentence of death, father," she answered.

"You must know, Anita," went on Senor Cota, "that it is the duty of your parents, who know life and have charge of your soul and happiness, to steer you clear of the rocks that obstruct life's pathway."

"Father," said the girl, going to him and laying her head upon his breast, "by this, you will kill me!"

But his final answer was, "Anita, I have given my word; it cannot be recalled."

With a piteous moan, the girl turned away from

her parents and sought Soila, her companion and friend, for with her Anita was sure to find sympathy and consolation.

While this scene was progressing, Don Mishel hastened away to make preparations for a great fiesta, at which would be announced his approaching marriage. He invited the whole countryside.

Never had there been more lavish plans for the pleasure of guests. It was a gay pageant of gay colorings. Under a grove of oaks great holes had been dug for the *tatemas* (barbecues), where were roasted whole beefs and sheep, deer and antelope, Don Mishel having sent hunters in all directions.

Tables were made, and set under wide-spreading oaks, making a very picturesque scene. A band of stringed instruments sent sweet notes through the breeze. At night a dance followed, the space set aside for this being covered with a *ramada*, the ground packed as smooth as a floor, and torches placed all around to furnish illumination. For three days and nights the fiesta continued. Then Don Mishel departed to his ranch, to get it in readiness for the reception of his bride.

While Claudio was sailing on his way to the governor, at Monterey, he wrote to Anita from a port on the way, and the message was sent by special courier. It said in part:

“On Board La Calandria.

“Anita, my angel, I salute thee. Twenty-one days since I last saw thee, beloved. What an age to me it seems. We have had very little of favorable winds, so have made slow progress towards our destination. Here on the placid waters of the Pacific, my thoughts are of thee, carissima. They dwell on the happy moments we have shared together.

“Thus, when I first met thee, and my eyes beheld thy lovely face, I felt the presence of an angelic creature. Thou canst never guess what thou art to my life,—the ambition thou has inspired, the courage to accept the work that it was my duty to undertake. I now go forward with all confidence, to gain a palm of glory which I will lay at your feet.

“For hast thou not made me acquainted with all the joys of the soul, every gladness man can desire?

“Yet, there are moments of doubt that assail me. What can they be? Doubt thee, *Anita mia*? No, no, for I still hear in my soul the voice that can never be false, ‘Thine now, and forever!’ The memory stirs in my heart, like a living thing; the music of thy enchanting voice rings in my ear, and the sound still is there.

“And, too, I recall joyfully the sweet tones of thy voice blended with the harmonies of that quiet air, the moonlit eve, the solitude around us, ‘I

shall love thee in life and after death—

“What a memory for life, should there at any moment spring forth something,—perhaps a mere trifle,—that can blight our dearest hopes.

“But why dwell on this anguish, for when I return with triumph, after the success of my mission, I will claim thee, *carisima*. Then my vision will be realized. My life, my soul, farewell.”



CHAPTER VII.

CLAUDIO SUCCESSFUL IN HIS MISSION

THE morning of the day on which Claudio arrived at Monterey, the governor had departed on some important mission and would not return for several days. Claudio resigned himself to the inevitable, and after refreshing himself walked seaward and watched the fisherboats beat in across the bright blue bay.

The change of the scene at first amused him; then across it all would come the dream of ineffable sweetness,—his last moments with Anita.

Next Sunday he attended mass, and the balance of the day rested. When, at supper, Claudio's attendant told him it was rumored that the governor had returned, he bade him go and assure himself, if the report be true, and quickly returning, he said the governor was pointed out to him.

Claudio, having obtained an audience, speedily prepared, and presented himself before the governor. He told him of his mission, and presented the letters from Father Salvidea. The governor was charmed at learning that this young man of courtly grace was not so long ago from the mother country. He had, he mused, all that high and formal breeding which runs with pure Castilian blood, and by his manner showed that at one time he had lived among the festivities of life.

Claudio, with the delicate tact of a diplomat, begged the governor to graciously attend to the matter in hand as speedily as possible, as he had been greatly delayed at sea by unfavorable winds. There was a kind of appeal in the request that touched the governor.

"There are formalities, of course, you understand, Senor Lopez," said he; and asked Claudio various questions, which were answered tactfully and courteously.

"I will look further into this matter tomorrow, and in a day or two will give you the answer to the letters," concluded the governor.

The following day the father *presidente* claimed the governor's attention on a matter that brooked no delay. However, the governor requested that he be excused for the rest of the day, "For," he said, "I must be immediately in the affairs of this young man, concerning which I must be better in-

formed. Truly he is a most admirable young man."

Claudio, fevered with the desire to return, but maintaining a tolerable appearance of contentment, strolled about the beach. Then taking a book from among some he had brought with him, he climbed the bell-tower by the outer stair. There he sat, with the shadow of the belfry on his books, reading, and listening to the rushing of the waves. Occasionally he lifted his face, that he might view the landscape, and to better inhale the bracing air.

He saw his servant and the governor's page coming toward him, and was informed that the governor had summoned him.

The governor received Claudio with a friendly smile, and wished to know more of the entertaining at the mission. Claudio replied that they were forced, by the very fact of their situation, into a constant and abounding hospitality, and this of itself inevitably brought about large departures from the living originally practiced.

"Under Father Salvidea's regime, the mission is considered the most splendid and opulent on the coast," said he.

"And of your regime, also, Senor Lopez," smiled the governor; for Father Salvidea in his letter of introduction had said: "This will introduce Don Claudio Lopez, a young man who hath borne him-

self beyond the promise of his years. He has, indeed, exceeded my expectations, performing herculean tasks, not only with knowledge but with wisdom."

"The great army of neophytes in the mission speak for themselves," said Claudio.

"I am told, "went on the governor, "that of all the tribes on the Pacific Coast, the *San Gabrieleños* are the superiors of the others." "That may be," replied Claudio; "but with almost superhuman strength Father Salvidea attends to both the spiritual and corporal wants of that vast horde. Their love for him approaches to worship. More than mortal, indeed, is his strength, inasmuch as he has given himself, soul and body, to this lofty work. The best proof of his successful labors among the neophytes is that the whole mission establishment is a hive of industry, with the men plying trades, the women spinning, the children in school, and the young men learning music; for the father well knows the soul-elevating power of music and especially encourages it. After their daily labors, amusements and games are indulged in."

Then the conversation drifted to other subjects, so that the interview resulted in such a pleasant occasion as Claudio, in his fondest expectations, had never anticipated. The governor invited him to remain the rest of the week as his guest; but

Claudio, after thanking him heartily, assured him he would be delighted to do so, but doubted not that Father Salvidea was at that very moment anxiously looking for him.

Next morning the governor's secretary handed Claudio his letters, and he immediately set sail for the mission San Gabriel.

About this time, Anita received her lover's letter; and her grief was pitiful. She pressed the missive to her heart, repeating again and again his passionate and endearing sentences. "Beloved, yes, I love thee now, and will love thee after death. It is force, it is violence, that takes me from thee. I have been longing for thee, to be clasped in thine arms, and now,—now, I am to be given into Mishel's arms. I must,"—but she could not finish the sentence. She fell upon her knees, her hands clasped, and cried, "Permit it not, Almighty God!"

Soila heard the cry, and, hastening to her, took the beautiful girl in her arms, laid her, trembling in every limb, upon her bed, and soothed her as she would an infant until, exhausted, she fell asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

“MY LOVE, FOREVER WE MUST PART”



LAUDIO, in the course of time, returned, and, although being tired after his long ride from the *embarcadero*, and being late into the night, he felt buoyant and happy. Taking his guitar and cloak, he hurried to serenade his adored one.

Finding his way to the interior court garden, he stood beneath the window of the fair vision of his dreams. The beauty of the moonlight night added to the entrancing beauty of the scene around him. A wild, bright joy filled his heart, while the air, laden with the fragrant essence of the Castilian roses that grew beneath his loved one's window, entranced his very soul as he sang, in rich, low tones this serenade:

“Smiling in the eastern sky,
The moon in her beauty is shining.
Canst thou, my love, inactive be,
My love, are thou not waking?”

Celestial seraphime, in the midst
Of a radiant cloud in my dreams
I did behold thee. Hear, beloved,

My fervent prayer, hear the voice
Of a heart, adoring; life of my soul.
Awake! Awake!"

As the sweet notes of the guitar and the burning words of love floated in at her window, Anita awoke. In an ecstasy of joy she exclaimed, "It is he!"

But as the consciousness of all that had happened in his absence came like a stab to her heart, she called to Soila, "Soila, he must not know yet. Merciful Heavens, not yet!"

Soila told her it was best for him to know it then; and, as Claudio finished his song, Soila softly opened the window, and in a whisper told him all.

She saw him flinch, as though from a heavy blow; and he gazed at her with a strange, bewildered look, as if not believing what he heard.

After a moment of silence, however, he aroused himself by a supreme effort of will, and in voice calm and courteous said he wanted to hear his fate from Anita's own lips, and begged Soila to arrange a meeting.

After many protestations, she consented, and, with that turmoil of passionate grief that made him look years older, Claudio walked slowly away.

Soila told Anita of her promise; but, repenting of her own weakness, of the impropriety of the act, she said she would spare them both the pangs

of pain at parting; but Anita insisted on the meeting, promising to be calm.

At the appointed time, by the cove in the hill, they waited for Claudio.

Anita, contrary to her promise, surrendered herself to the bitterness of grief and despair, saying, “Soila, it is not only for my sorrow, but for his.”

“Anita,” said Soila, “I could see that each word, every word, I spoke, dug deep, as deep as the point of a dagger, though he spoke calmly.

“*Alma mia*, how can my lips speak the word that will wound his noble heart?” continued the girl. “Here I am, in the morning of life, crushed, crushed, by this terrible sorrow. O, that I could fall dead at his feet! *Dios mio*, help me; give me courage, to do my duty!”

After this outburst of grief, Anita became more calm; indeed, every trace of passion had disappeared, when Claudio approached.

Walking slowly towards them, with arms folded, abruptly he said: “Anita, is the report true?”

She gazed at him, upset by his harsh tone, and, too, benumbed by the cruel grief she saw he was suffering, was silent for a moment. By supreme effort she gained courage, and told him the report was true.

“That promise, so dear to my heart when told, why not keep?” he asked her, but she could only reply, “I must obey my parents.”

Though her heart was breaking, her demeanor was calm. Claudio, with impassionate words, reproached her, saying, "Thou didst vow to be faithful. Ah, but that vow thy faithless heart profaned. Ingrate and perjurer, how, O! how, can you look on my suffering, my soul's agony, so calmly?"

"O, Claudio, don't, I beseech thee. Don't add to my anguish. 'Tis the cruel hand of destiny, the ruthless force of fate," she cried.

"So 'twas force, 'twas violence," murmured Claudio.

"Anita, the ship is in the port. Come, my love, fly with me, my fair one, away across the seas to my castle-home, away from the arms of that traitor," he appealed.

"Claudio, perturb not my hard assent. Thou knowest I, too, suffer. Yet I must obey the will of my parents. Faithful my troth I will keep, and in silence for thee I will weep. *Adios, para siempre,*" and with that she held out her arms to him, and, as he held her to his heart, he forgot all things, save the enthralling joy of the moment.

Sobs shook the girl from head to foot. With a swift impulse Claudio loosed his arms and held her away.

"Anita," he said, "behold me in my great despair. Mercy for thyself, I pray thee have. Mercy, in Heaven's name, I pray thee show me, Anita, for thee my heart is breaking!"

Tears were streaming down Anita's face, and her lips moved, but she could not speak. Claudio could see, plainer than if written in words, the grief of her heart, yet she was a strange example of the courage, the firmness, the power of sacrifice. Suddenly a tremor came over her as of sudden fear. Both heard a rustle in the bushes.

"Claudio, my love, forever we must part!" and with a last, soulful embrace, they parted, Claudio walking away as if in a dream.

The rustle in the shrubbery was no other than the ever-spying Don Mishel who, as he saw Anita in Claudio's arms, made a fierce dash towards them, blind with rage. His first impulse was to plunge a dagger into his rival's heart. He made a movement as if to fling himself upon him, but in a flash his quick reasoning came to his rescue, and he realized, that by any violence on his part he would lose Anita, whom he had come to love more and more, until that love was the master passion of his life.

With a gesture of intense fury he stepped back noiselessly and went to a recess where he had left his horse. Still burning with inward rage, he mounted, and brutally burying the spurs deep into his horse's flanks, rode like mad, up and down the hills, not minding where. Murder was in his heart; but he struggled hard to suppress the passion.

Suddenly rising in his stirrups, he checked his

horse, and bringing his clenched fist down upon the pommel of the saddle, muttered, "A duel! A duel! I'll get him with my best art," and with his hand still clenched, he made a movement as if he held the weapon that would wound his rival to death.

Becoming calmer after this outburst, Don Mishel rode resolutely towards the *Rosa de Castilla*. He saw Anita, and asked her to come to the court garden with him, thinking, "I will hold my peace." But as his eyes met hers, the fires of jealousy overmastered him.

Telling her what he had witnessed, he inquired, "How answer you for yourself? I will get him for this! I will kill him in a duel!" he shouted. "Thou hast doomed this man!"

He fell into a stupid silence; but her plaintive voice, her sobs of fear, her pleadings for Claudio's life, roused him, as if he was freed from a heavy load upon his heart and brain; and with a harsh laugh, his visage darkened with a hideous sneer, he said, "Thou asketh me mercy for my rival? Thy pleading infuriates me more. I repeat, I shall slay him, the traitor!"

His fiendish aspect frightened Anita, who, dizzy with terror, staggered into the house, found Soila, and in the midst of her sobs told of Don Mishel's threats.

Soila clenched her hands and exclaimed, "*Dios mio!* I am in some fault for this, although against

my will I consented to that meeting. This," she said, "is my punishment for consenting to it, when my conscience told me it was wrong."

"You who know the noble greatness of his mind must know how bitter are these tears that I shed. My love, my sacred love, that I should be doomed to destroy thee; I, who love thee more than life itself," sobbed Anita, as she was seized with a deadly shivering.

Soila put her to bed, telling her to be brave and help her devise some plan whereby they could save Claudio.

Quite suddenly there came an inspiration: "Father Salvidea," said Soila, "he will save him."

"Soila, hasten you to him," pleaded Anita, "I have no power to move."

Soila met Father Salvidea as he was coming in from his rounds among the neophytes. Rushing towards him, she told the object of her visit, and confessed the part she had played in consenting to the meeting of the lovers.

The father told her to leave it all to him, and to tell no one about the trouble.

Soila returned and found Anita quiet, but with an expectant and pathetic stare. For a moment the duenna was silent.

Anita cried, "Soila, why stand in this strange stare? What heard you? I would fain know what you have to say."

“Nothing but good,” answered Soila. “Father Salvidea bids you be passive, and says that he knows all, but to tell no one of this incident.”



CHAPTER IX.

SNATCHED FROM THE JAWS OF DEATH

DON MISHEL, that same evening, sent his second, bearing a challenge, to Claudio.

“Say to Don Mishel I will attend him on the edge of the forest, by the hillside, at sunrise tomorrow. I will have swords,” said he.

Claudio immediately sent a message to his cousin, Cuso de Medino, saying he wished to see him without delay; to him he related the particulars in detail.

Knowing Claudio’s antagonist as a large and powerfully-built man, Cuso had his fears as to the result, so, unbeknown to Claudio, found his way to the house where Don Mishel had his dwelling.

He was received with that courtesy common among men of the world, and for some little time the two interchanged commonplace subjects.

Suddenly Don Mishel, guessing the object of Cuso’s visit, turned on him fiercely and said: “Come! Enough of this babble. Let us have frankness. What is your mission here?”

"I am on a mission of peace," said Cuso.

Mishel looked at him with unwinking eyes, grinned, and, showing his teeth between his slightly parted lips, replied, "I have no quarrel with you."

"You are a bit hot-headed, I take it," went on Cuso, "but all I ask is fair speech. Can you deny this?"

"Not if you talk straight," said Don Mishel, "so come to the point."

"Although I expect little will come from it, I will say that you have an unfair advantage in this duel with my cousin," said Cuso.

"Enough!" Don Mishel said sternly, as he stood up, his long arm with its bursting muscles showing against his sleeve, and outstretched towards the door. "Keep strictly to your code of rules, and I shall keep to mine."

There was a reckless audacity about the man which Cuso could not fail to observe; and he saw that to discuss the subject further was useless; moreover, it was his duty to depart, and communicate with Don Mishel's second.

Involuntarily, Cuso took a step backward, staring into the man's face. That he was a renegade of some sort, he did not doubt, yet it never occurred to him that he could be connected with that band of suspicious characters which he had en-

countered in his prospecting trips in the mountains. They were daring and bold riders, always pretending to be looking after stock, but seemingly busy at something else.

Once he had come upon them in an inaccessible, high-walled valley; from a mountain peak he could look at them; but as the night closed in darkness he could not perceive their movements. This accomplished scoundrel, surmised Cuso, was the one who had incited the people to make accusations against the saintly Father Salvidea. There flashed across his mind stories he had heard of robberies and atrocities committed, and of a mighty bandit-chief who had built his house on a mountainside at the foot of a deep canyon, where he kept a cache with secret tunnels that opened into this inaccessible canyon. This chief, a human monster with a will uncontrolled by fear, had the faculty of bringing honest men to a base submission to his will, and of compelling all men who came in his employ to take an oath of secrecy, threatening death to any who broke it. "Is this the man," queried Cuso to himself, "this dastardly-eyed scoundrel who grinned into my face, evidently amused at my undisguised expression of anxiety over the fate of my noble cousin? I would go back and kill him as I would a venomous reptile, were I sure. Yes, kill him, and rid the world of the devil before more innocent people could

suffer through his crimes. Yet, murderous renegade and beast though he may be, I could not kill him in cold blood. I will leave him to a higher power, to be dealt with as he deserves."

Sunrise, at the time and place appointed, the duelists and their seconds appeared, Claudio with stern, immobile countenance, Don Mishel with a leer. Cuso could not but make known his fear for the fate of his cousin. "Hast any word to say, cousin?" he inquired. "Thy assailant is skilled, and a devil in his wrath." "If my rival's sword should triumph," replied Claudio, "tell her I blessed her with my dying breath. To my mother, dear, say her son fell on the field of honor." "By Heaven! I admire his self-command!" mused Cuso, "and I in fear and distrust. But yet, a dauntless spirit I must show, and so speak to Don Mishel's second."

Cuso approached the second, who said, "Let us walk toward Don Mishel; we must make peace with them if we can." It was Monsieur La Croix who spoke. "Is there no way but this, Don Mishel?" he asked. "No satisfaction can be done but by the pangs of death to one or the other," replied Don Mishel fiercely. "I suffered the insult." Cuso turned towards Claudio and said, "He will not be pacified. His soul can only be appeased with slaughter." "You mistake me, cousin," replied Claudio. "I did not bid thee

plead for peace. Thinkest thou I would give up my honor to save my poor clay?"

A strangely opposed pair, they appeared as they approached the arena. Mishel, dark, of unusual stature, with prodigious muscular development about the arms and chest, and with every appearance of activity and strength; Claudio, a model of comeliness and grace. An unequal fight, it seemed to Cuso, but Monsieur La Croix saw something in Claudio's steady grey eye and firm step which left the result open to doubt.

To this forbidding figure Claudio walked, followed by his cousin, Cuso.

All being in readiness, the seconds paced the distance, examined the keen bright blades, and handed them to the rivals.

"One, two, three! Engage!" The duel began.

Mishel's strokes were well aimed, but Claudio's warded them with swift and certain skill.

Now was the time for the purer living and agile limb to show its value. Claudio's arm sped over and under Mishel's sword with a swiftness bewildering to the eye,—so swift that the eye could not follow the quick play of his blade.

Mishel fought desperately. On and on came his sword points; now at his foeman's face; now at his throat; now at his chest.

Claudio parried and dodged them. He knew well that such efforts could not long be sustained;

for it was clearly to be seen that Mishel was losing strength, as he was panting heavily from fruitless efforts; yet he continued parrying and thrusting in desperation.

To Claudio's endurance there seemed to be no limit, no abatement, no weakening to the spirit in his steady gray eye. He continued to guard, waiting for his opportunity that he might hit effectively when it presented itself.

Finally he saw his chance had come and raised his sword to strike so that he might bring it down with a swinging blow, when suddenly the tall, stately form of Father Salvidea appeared between them, as if springing from the very ground.

Turning to Claudio, he said, "Claudio, Claudio, do not stain your hands with blood!" Don Mishel stood, as if rooted to the spot. His immobility but cloaked an internal struggle, however, for suddenly he made a dash towards his antagonist. Father Salvidea raised his hand with a gesture of command, his eye fixed on Don Mishel's face. Don Mishel looked at him stupidly, but checked himself in his wild rush, and slowly the frenzied passion died, leaving him shaking like a leaf.

"Yes, Don Mishel," said Father Salvidea, "I snatched thee out of the jaws of death. Claudio's athletic training hath made him quick in action, and he hath in him skill, youth, and strength, that supplied him advantage over you. I will advise

you both to shake hands." Don Mishel moved a pace, then another, with outstretched hand, toward Claudio.

But Claudio folded his arms across his breast and said, raising his eyes towards Father Salvidea, "In all reverence to you, I, like the Douglas, will say, 'this hand is Claudio's alone'." Father Salvidea then spoke with the imperious accent of the master who is accustomed to command, and told them to keep the matter secret, and peace hereafter. All parties agreed, and, sheathing their bloodless swords, departed. Yet they knew not that another duel had been fought between a saint and a devil, and that Father Salvidea, with his spiritual powers, had undone the devil.

Don Mishel, pacing in his apartment like a caged lion, in a rage at his shattered plan to destroy his rival, was racking his brain for a means to do away with Claudio. He planned one thing, then another, but none suited him. He could not think clearly, since the morning experience, and could not understand why. He knew of some recipes which caused death as if by natural illness. He would have Agapito Sepulveda attach himself to the mission service and have him do the work. Yet, that would take too long, and, too, there was that friar to contend with. Suddenly he stopped; he had adopted a plan, which will be known later.

CHAPTER X.

“YOU HAVE THE WRONG MAN!”

IN the afternoon of that eventful day Don Cuso called on his cousin and found him at his work; but making ready to start on his rounds of inspection of the works which were under construction at the mission. Cuso complimented his cousin on his calmness after the strenuous morning.

A smile flitted over Claudio's face as he said, "I suppose I ought to be excited over it all; but the fact is, you have just one big moment of excitement when the tragic time comes,"—(a smile came over Cuso's face as he remembered the dramatic turn the near tragedy had taken)—"after that reaction, then calmness. That is the element I am experiencing at the present moment. So you see, I have not been swept away by excitement. But I must be going."

Cuso remembered the look on Don Mishel's face as he turned back and glared at his cousin; there was treachery in that fiendish, ugly look, he thought. He must be secretly on his guard for the safety of his cousin.

Endeavoring to dissuade Claudio from making his usual rounds that day, he said, "It being so

late, thou canst not make the rounds before dark."

"O," said Claudio, "I will master the situation." He felt his cousin wanted to spare him, thinking he must be tired out.

"I was convinced of that this morning," smiled Cuso; "nevertheless, allow me to go in your place now."

"*Bien si es tu gusto.* If it is your pleasure, cousin, go. Do you know that in trouble it is worth while living to feel the real thing: a disinterested and faithful friendship?" said Claudio.

The rays of the setting sun touched the gorgeous woods with a bright glow and the day waned away, as Cuso rode slowly on, watching the western gleam until it vanished. Not a human being came within his vision, only the dense woods in myriads of tints of green, bronze and red, the western sky so clear, and the stars sparkling in the swift twilight which links day and night. He had gone the rounds of inspection and was leisurely riding on, carelessly wandering into less familiar regions, but with no prospect of becoming lost; for he had explored nearly every portion of the valley up to the mountains above.

He turned back and hurried on, as it was growing darker; though he knew well what course to take to bring him back speedily to the mission. Presently, however, he became conscious of other people in the wood besides himself; he saw no

one, but he heard the breaking of twigs and the stir of leaves, which told him of human presence. He had a sense of being surrounded. There was no doubt of it now, for he heard a whispering sound. Then a half-score of men seemed to rise from the ground around and out of the bushes. He had only time to realize they were bandits, when he heard the whirr of a *lariata* that was thrown around his body and he was felled to the ground. Unconscious, he was carried away.

Regaining his senses, Cuso felt a splash of water on his face, and a flask was put to his lips. He realized he had been kidnapped, and that the hand behind the business was Don Mishel's. But what did they want with him? It was clear some deep-laid plot lay behind all this.

He was roused from his musings by the harsh voice of the bandit, Sepulveda, saying, "Come this way, senor," and so saying the bandit turned aside the dense brush, plowing ever deeper, until they came to a place where great rocks and boulders jutted up around the green. Before them rose a steep cliff, on whose jagged walls grew, here and there, vines and brush. At the foot of this cliff grew a tree, stunted, but with spreading green branches, up which the bandit climbed a few feet from the ground, when he vanished into the face of the cliff.

But in a moment the branches were parted and

the bandit looked down and beckoned Cuso to follow. Climbing the tree, he seized hard hold upon a vine and found himself, upon his knees, within a small cave. There the bandit, taking hold of his hand, led him to the end of the cavern, where there was a winding passage which brought them to a second, and larger cave.

The bandit whistled, and, in a while, a glow appeared, then a man bearing a torch which showed a wide cave, whose rough walls glistened here and there, and whose rocky floor ended abruptly in a yawning gulf, from whose depths came murmurs, and rippings of water.

Halting on the opposite side of the chasm, the man lifted his torch and, stooping, took up a plank, which he thrust across the gulf. Cuso crossed the plank, the torch-bearer going ahead, leading the way, and the bandit walking behind, along a low-roofed passageway, until they came to a cavern where a fire was burning, the red light from which played upon the polished blades and arms that hung against the wall. In a corner, a man lay snoring. The bandit shook him roughly, to awaken him, and ordered him to make some coffee.

Cuso sat down beside the fire and rested his head upon his hands. The coffee being ready, the bandit poured out a cup for himself and another for Cuso, into which he put some drops, a

decoction that, while making one half stupid, gives him a sense of restful contentment. After drinking the coffee, the bandit brought a stone tablet, upon which were some figures and a skull, saying it was the law, that whoever fell into their hands to swear secrecy to whatever took place or was seen thereabouts by placing his hand on the skull and putting some mark or signing his name, in his life blood, which was gotten by piercing the wrist. In case of refusal, death, and a burial in the yawning abyss over which they had passed, was inflicted.

Cuso did not want to sign and swear on the tablet; but, seeing nothing but certain death before him, did so; besides, while he would be compelled to keep his oath, he could watch over his cousin; for should he fall into the hands of this murderous band the life and light would go out of San Gabriel.

After taking the oath, Cuso threw himself on a bed of leaves which had been prepared and presently was sound asleep. While he slept, the chief of the band unexpectedly made his appearance, went directly to where he was reposing, looked into his face, and with an oath turned to his captain and said, "*Es el Cuso!* You have the wrong man!"

Don Mishel, for the chief was indeed he, flew into a towering rage. "I wanted that man. Thou

knowest who," he said; and then followed a torrent of oaths and blasphemies so terrific that even the toughened Sepulveda's blood ran cold.

"You ordered the capture of the man who would be riding about the mission works," he said.

"Yes, yes," Mishel muttered, "I scorned to speak his name."

After holding a consultation with Sepulveda, the chief said Cuso was too dangerous a man to be turned loose, so they would have to do away with him. Bardo, the cook, poured out their coffee, after drinking which they laid themselves down to sleep.

Bardo, going to where Cuso was asleep, shook him gently, saying, "Señor, señor, awake!"

"*Que hay?*" said Cuso, raising his head.

"I decocted *yerba aniz* in their coffee," said Bardo, "that I might set you free. I heard they planned to murder you. They are fast locked in sleep now."

"And why should you save my life?" asked Cuso.

"On a certain day, within these mountains, you found me sorely wounded and near death with thirst," answered Bardo. "You carried me in your arms up the steep mountain, you cared for me, taking me to your mountain cabin, where you are wont to rest on your prospecting tours. Now fol-

low me, señor," and so saying he took a lantern and began to descend.


Cuso followed down a narrow stair and along a passage which ended abruptly against a small door, whose rusted iron was banded with mighty clamps. Here Bardo paused to fit the key in the lock, and he strained and panted before the door yielded and opened. Looking up at Cuso he said, "Señor, there lieth thy way to life and the world. As thou didst save my life, so do I give thee thine."

Thus Cuso stepped out into the cool air of dawn. For awhile he stood staring at the sky, where yet a few stars shone, and drank in mighty breaths of the fresh air while he got his bearings. Then, following a bridle path, he came into the valley below.



CHAPTER XI.

FATE RESCUES ANITA FROM DON MISHEL

NITA'S wedding-day approached. Don Mishel came to the *Rose de Castilla*, bringing costly gifts for his fiancée, and to the Señor and Señora Cota he presented the deeds to their lands, in his happiness and enthusiasm. The marriage was to take place the next day, at mass.

Returning to his ranch, he gave a party to his friends who, in fact, were members of his band, and to his best man, M. La Croix. Dancing and drinking were freely indulged in until the small hours of the morning, so, when he arose after a rest, scarcely over the effects of the night's hilarity, he required the assistance of his best man to dress for the wedding.

Claudio, knowing that next morning Anita's marriage was to take place, would not be near; so went to the hillside to pray for strength and self-mastery. The thought that Anita, whom he loved more than life itself and who loved him, was to become the wife of another man, was rending his heart in twain. Every nerve was strained as on a rack, and the thought that she did not love this man, but was giving herself as a sacrifice to her parents, increased his torture. Almost delirious in his grief, at times his poetic spirit would give vent to these lines:

“Beloved land where I was born,
Forced from thee, to this I came.
I protest 'tis force that brought me,
Or 'twas fortune willed should be my dower.

Flowers that met me, flourishing gay
With thy beauty, sparkling, filled my eyes;
Why are thorns thy gifts today?
I did but touch the sweetness of romance,

And now must lose her,
But to have known her, to have loved her,
Is worth this pain,—I hold that dear!"

"O, if I could say a prayer," he cried, "that would reach the hearing of God. The Holy Book says 'prayer out of a poor man's mouth reacheth the ears of God and His judgment comes speedily'."

With a sudden wave of emotion he arose, and with countenance raised Heavenward and arms extended in the appealing attitude of a struggling soul, he cried aloud: "Father Almighty, save her from that awful fate, and I vow my life to thy service. Hear, Heaven, and bear witness to my vow."

And, as if the great turmoil of pain and grief that pierced his very soul had been checked by an all-suffering goodness and clemency, as he stood, with his eyes raised to the great expanse above, a soothing sense of peace swept over his soul, and he fell into a peaceful slumber.

Meanwhile, at the call of the *Alva*, the household at the *Rosa de Castilla* was stirred for their duties in anticipation of a great fiesta. Soila, going to Anita's chamber, found her still in bed. She was urged to rise, as the first chimes were ringing, and the hour of her marriage was fast approaching.

Anita pleaded to be left a while longer,—as one would for a stay of sentence being led to his doom,—but finally arose and, with the assistance of Soila, dressed, looking, in her bridal robes, like some ethereal being. She was in readiness for the bridegroom.

While the preparations for the wedding were going on at the house, Don Mishel, with M. La Croix and a driver, stepped into a coach. Don Mishel, feeling stupid and drowsy and thinking the fresh air would revive him, took a seat beside the driver, and was half asleep when the coach suddenly struck a boulder; being unable to keep his hold, he fell out, and the wheels of the heavy coach passed over his chest, crushing it in.

Quickly, M. La Croix jumped out, pulled the unconscious form from under the coach, and felt the pulse; there was yet a feeble fluttering.

Suddenly Don Mishel's big frame shook convulsively, and his head moved slightly.

"Don Mishel," said his friend, "you are dying. Do you want to say anything? Do you want the priest?"

"Yes, I know I am dying," he replied. He lay still for a moment, then continued:

"Father Salvidea! Father," his voice almost a whisper, but singularly clear, "I confess I have been a bad man. I wanted money, money, and to obtain that, I robbed the widow and orphan and

left them destitute. I caused Senor Cota's ranch house to be burned, destroying his priceless treasures; I sent my captain, Sepulveda, to do the work; I did that, in order to break the senor's spirit, and to obtain the promise of his beautiful daughter's hand. I robbed the legal heirs of their buried riches of gold and silver, using my arts to frighten them away; they left the field clear to me, just as they had reached their treasure, and I afterward buried it in another place. I cheated the widow of her home and all she possessed, and left her destitute with her three little children. I have been a living lie, most of my life. Now, I am meeting the fate of all transgressors."

His chest heaving with exhaustion, suddenly he cried, deliriously: "Speed up, Pepo! Speed up! We will be late!"

When he spoke again, he seemed entirely conscious, and as he opened his eyes and fastened them on his friend, he said, "Anita! Anita! Take me there quickly. I want to look upon her lovely face once more." The weakening voice and the agonized appeal made the scene pitiful.

M. La Croix's face was pale with emotion; for the confession of the dying man was a revelation to him. With moistened eyes he nodded to the coachman, and the two lifted Don Mishel into the coach and speedily drove to the Rosa de Castilla, where all the household was in confusion.

The groom was behind the hour. They were wondering what had happened, when, in looking towards the road, they saw the coach, coming at full speed. It was driven into the courtyard, where two men alighted and were soon carrying the dying Don Mishel towards the house.

On passing the threshold, Don Mishel turned towards the assembled company; on his face was pictured the despair of the damned; muttering curses and imprecations, he breathed his last.

Thus passed away a triple life,—a bandit chief, a thief, and a murderer.

In the midst of all this confusion a horseman was seen approaching the house on a foaming steed. A few rods from the door, the horse fell dead; but the rider, after whirling in the air, alighted safely on his feet upon the ground. Seeing his horse was dead, he ran to the house with all speed, and asked to see the Senor and Senora Cota.

He told them he rode hard that night, risking his life, so that he might get there in time to save their beloved daughter from being married to a bandit chief and murderer. For years he had served the senor, and seen the lovely child grow in her innocence and beauty.

“He has been judged by a higher power. Don Mishel is dead,” they said.


While these scenes were rapidly passing, Anita, in an uncontrollable impulse, had rushed up the mountainside, followed by Soila. She knew not why, but with the inspiration of a soul set free of its fetters, her spirit gave vent to song, and she sang in a sweet, low tone:

“Where may I find thee, heart’s beloved,
Beneath what skies?
In vain I seek thee everywhere,
With tear-dim’d eyes.
To glen, to mount, to tide,
My grief is known,
As each replies: not here shalt thou
Behold thine own.”



CHAPTER XII.

“FATHER, I AM RESIGNED”

AUDIO, slumbering, was partly awakened by a voice. “What is that I heard,” he said, half awake. The faint, sweet voice, as from far away, again reached his ears, and rising, he looked around, but saw no one. “Are my senses deceiving me?” he asked of himself, as he started to follow the sound.

“It is hers!” he exclaimed, but remembering his vow, he said, “Cease, sweet accents, cease to

sing. Though that voice greatly charmed before, now it is changed to a harmful blast."

But he continued to follow the sound, and came upon a scene that held him spellbound. In a cove of the wood-crowned hill was Anita, as in the vision of his dream, and he exclaimed, "My dream! My dream!"

As she saw him, Anita stepped lightly towards him with arms outstretched, and he rushed to meet her embrace, for the moment forgetting all, but stopped abruptly and said: "My vow. I cannot, I must not." He had prayed never to see her again, and now, here she stood before him unless she was the vision of his dream.

"Claudio!" she cried, and the sweetness of her voice, the tenderness of her tone, moved him.

"Anita!" he answered, "how came you here?"

She moved her lips, but words came not, and she looked at him in mute appeal. Briefly he told her of his vow.

"Why, O why, was it given at such a price," she said, covering her face with her beautiful hands.

Claudio glanced inquiringly at Solia, who related to him, in a few words, all that had transpired. "Father, I thank Thee, Thou has heard my prayer," said Claudio reverently.

And, as Anita heard those words, she stepped up to him, and taking both his hands in hers, said,

"My beloved, hold sacred thy vow; for it is written that they who break such vows incur their own damnation. Heaven help us both!"

Gently kissing her hand, he turned away.

Soila and Anita hastened home and Senora Cota came out to meet them. In the excitement, Anita had been forgotten; but now they were frantically looking for her. As she saw her mother, she rushed to her arms, and with a cry fell senseless at her feet. Soila tenderly raised her in her arms and carried her into the house, where, after a time which seemed an age to her parents she revived as from a heavy stupor, but delirious and with a high fever.

Her life for a long time was despaired of; but youth and vitality were in her favor, and, after days of suspense, she rallied. She wanted Claudio; but at first had not the courage to ask for him. Finally she was told that he had not been to her house, but had sent a page every day to ask after her health.

His cousin, too, came every day to render his assistance, until Soila's marriage to him, for, when he saw Anita out of danger he would brook no delay. "I'll take no chances of losing her. I'll have her now," he said.

Chona was chosen from among some young women to wait on Anita, and no one ever held a position with greater pride than did she. She was

most devoted, and was delighted to wait upon and fuss around her charge continually.

Claudio plunged deep into his mission work. Still when his duties permitted, he turned toward the hillside. He loved to ramble in the scene which had been so much to him, both his heaven and his Gethsemane. There he would often linger alone wrapt in a melancholy charm till the last gleam of day faded from the west. There among the scenes of nature—the wildwood walks that skirted the mountains, the coves and recesses, the silence and grandeur of solitude impressed a sacred awe upon his heart and lifted his thoughts above worldly sorrows and cares to the God of heaven and earth. Moreover, in that beautiful and hallowed spot, in the stillness and dignity of the place he found comfort from his affliction and soulful rest. He had learned to love this country and his work in the mission, where he had achieved an unparalled success in the construction of building and in teaching the neophites. Both these lines of activity interested and fascinated him; but in spite of this strong tie which held him, he made the decision to leave the mission forever.

He would go away and fight this mad love which at times caused him to waver in his resolution to keep his vow, so solemnly made to God, when the horror of marriage to Mishel was dark upon her whom his whole soul loved with an adoring fervor.

At these times of wavering, he would fight as men fight against the flames which are destroying their home, finding that in spite of all the water they can pour upon the blaze the flames will spring up again in the old places and in the new. Yet unaware his thoughts would wander to his lost love, and awakened in his mind the poetic spirit which made his heart lament and sing.

"Go, breezes, whisper to the Fairest in this land,
When next her steps shall hallow these wood-
land walks and ways,
Of one who once gazed fondly on her gentle, radi-
ant smile,
But whose heart, now desolated, for her pres-
ence vainly prays.

If I could paint upon this rock her soul-illum-
ined eyes,
The wonders of her rhythmic form, her magic
pensive face,
It would bring the whole world hitherward with
eagerness to see
A beauty which surpasses every human charm
and grace.

O holy picture in my heart! a light of glory there
To safely guide my wayward feet wherever
they may roam,

E'en to the world's great end or beyond the far-
thest star,
To look upon you anywhere were country,
friends and home.

But he must go, go away and never see her again, go away without one spoken word of farewell between them.

Since early childhood Claudio had been taught the doctrines, practices and fervors of religion, and so all that was strongest and noblest within him had responded with a simple faith and depth of ardent devotion which made his religion the most vital part of his being, the most hallowed motive of his life.

This it was which had given him a noble fortitude in his sorrow. This it was which at times gave him that noble exhaltation in which his firm belief that his vow had saved Anita from a fate worse than death became a rapture of gratitude to God. Through his anguish and deep travail for her horrid condition, compelled to an unwilling marriage to a wicked man, he believed that God had heard his prayers, accepted his vow and set the beloved of his heart free from the grip of hellish evil.

Finally he made his decision: resolving to leave the mission, forever. He would go away and fight against that mad love which at times caused him

to waver in his resolution to keep his vow. At those times he would fight as men fight against the flames which spring up afresh. He would go without a word of farewell. He must never see her again.

Anita, too, was struggling against her love, but ill succeeding. She would say to Chona, "Why, O why, does he not come? I am weary waiting. I wish that I were dead."

There was so much despair in her voice that Chona could hardly bear to hear her, besides, she could see that the unsatisfied longing of her heart was consuming her.

Becoming alarmed, Chona went to see Father Salvidea, told him of Anita's condition, and beseeched him to come and talk to her, which the kindly father was pleased to do.

Coming into Anita's presence, he said, "My poor child, thy condition grieves me."

"Father," said Anita, "you doubtless know, inasmuch as you know all things. Have you not discovered the cause of my sufferings?"

Father Salvidea looked at her with something like reproach in his gaze. She continued, "I should have gone to you in the confessional, but unhappily my heart has hardened itself; I have neither the courage nor the desire to speak to the confessor, but only to the friend."

"What are you saying about hardness of heart,"

said the father, "thou who art so good. Come, calm thyself, and speak with moderation, Anita."

"How can I avoid talking foolishly, when the spirit of evil possesses me."

"Holy Virgin, don't talk nonsense, child. This is dreadful. But the real trouble with you is, you have been ill, you are delirious."

"Would to God it were so."

"How is this, child? What notion has entered your mind?"

Anita rose from her seat, drew near the reverend father, and, with signs of deepest distress, in a trembling voice said: "Claudio has not been near me since that memorable day. He loves me, and I love him. I love him," she repeated, in higher accents.

"Claudio told me all," said Father Salvidea. "His love is without hope now, a love not to be thought of. Calm thyself. The mercy of God is infinite."

"Father, you well know much of what has happened. What did he say? Tell me all—all. I adore him," Anita continued, "and he loves me, too, although he strives to conquer his love, and in the end he might succeed in doing so. You, father, are very much to blame. With the goodness of your heart you did nothing but praise Claudio to me." Then conscious of her injustice, she said, "Forgive me father, see how perverse I am. I

want to throw the responsibility on the best and the holiest of men. Even though you had not spoken to me of the good qualities of Claudio, I should have discovered them all,—the grace of his person, the elegance of his manner, his eyes full of fire and intelligence. Your praises charmed me, because they were an echo of my own thoughts. This inextinguishable fire is consuming me."

"Alas, my child," said the father, "it grieves me to hear you speak so." Anita covered her face with her hands, and began to weep. Anita's tears flowed. Father Salvidea suffered her to weep without interruption, and watched her with a look of benignity which might have characterized the countenance of a guardian angel.

When she became tranquil he spoke again, with his eyes raised to heaven as in prayer, and dignified by the pious solemnity of the saint, he said: "Claudio leaves the day after tomorrow. He is going to fulfill his vow."

"Fulfill his vow," said Anita, "and give me my death wound? It shall not be! By Heaven, it shall not be!" She had risen and her attitude, her gesture, had something of tragic animation.

Father Salvidea regarded her almost with terror. She seemed more like an angry lioness than a timid gazelle. She sank into a chair, weeping more bitterly than ever, abandoning herself to

greater anguish. The father's heart was touched with pity.

"Anita, child," he said, "be reasonable. Console yourself with the thought that it was not without a hard struggle he was able to control himself. He loves you with his whole heart, but God and duty come first. Remember how deep must be the wound you made in his heart, the anguish he suffered. Let this suffice you; be generous; be courageous; be his rival in firmness. Let him depart, and guard his image in your memory, but as the creature, reserving for the Creator the noblest part of your soul. Control thyself for the sake of our Lord and His Blessed Mother. Let Claudio go. When he is far away, thou wilt recover thy serenity by degrees, and will preserve in thy memory only a grateful recollection of him. As he prayed in the mountain for thy deliverance, forgetting himself in his agony, he made that vow to Heaven. He then denied to himself the pleasures and passions of this world, and rose victorious over himself. The remembrance of him will be like a beautiful poem, whose music will harmonize with your existence."

"Father," Anita answered, "thy holy words lend me courage. I will conquer myself. I will, I will cast this love from me."

"Very well, my child; it is thus I want to see you, courageous and resigned."

"Oh, father, I am resigned; for however great the effort I might make, I could never succeed in elevating myself to him. There is no science he does not understand, no region of the intellectual world, however exalted, to which he may not soar, while I am incapable of following him, even in my hopes or aspirations."

"Anita, don't say such things, or think them. He is going away because he must fulfill his vow."

Anita noted the convulsion which passed over the father's face as he said, "Can you realize what loss the mission will suffer through his leaving? How I shall miss him!"


Anita, who had left off crying, said quietly, "Father, I am resigned. You shall see how peace and serenity will spring up in my heart, when Claudio is gone."

"God grant it," said the father, taking his leave.



CHAPTER XIII.

"I CANNOT CURE YOUR MISTRESS' MALADY."

NITA had risen as the reverend father was taking his leave. After closing the door, she stood for a moment in the middle of the room, her gaze fixed upon space. Then she broke into tears again, and threw herself on the floor, her face buried in her hands.

Chona had heard her sobs from without, and hurried to her. When she saw her mistress on the floor, she gave way to a thousand expressions of fury. "Here is a pretty sight," she cried. "What a way to console her!"

Chona now carefully lifted Anita in her arms and placed her on the sofa. "What is the meaning of all this?" she asked. "I wager that Father Salvidea has been preaching you a sermon as bitter as gall, and has left you with your heart torn to pieces with grief. Come, leave off crying, and tell me what is the matter. What did he say to you?"

"He said nothing that could offend me," Anita finally answered. "The father has advised me to forget him; but look you, Chona, I cannot; it is beyond my strength. While Father Salvidea was here, I thought I had strength for everything; but no sooner was he gone than I lost my courage and fell, crushed, to the floor. The arguments of Father Salvidea are full of wisdom, and just; but I love Claudio, and this argument is more powerful than all others put together. God forgive me for what I am about to say; but I feel it in the depth of my heart: for him, I would give even the salvation of my soul!"

"*Madre Santissima!*" exclaimed Chona.

"It is true, may our Blessed Lady of Sorrow forgive me. I am mad, I blaspheme," cried Anita.

"Yes, child, Heaven help us; but, if I were you,

I would not take Heaven to task. I would have it out with him,” muttered Chona. “I should like to bring him here, and make him beg your pardon and kiss your feet.”

“No, Chona; I see my madness is contagious, and that you are raving, too. There is nothing for me to do, but forget him, and I will, even if it costs me my life. If I die, he will cherish my memory and my love in his heart.”

“*Dios Eterno!*” exclaimed Chona, “do you want me to take out my handkerchief, and bellow like a calf? Anita, don’t talk about dying, even in jest. You are nervous, and very much excited. Can’t I bring you a cup of *azahar* (orange blossom tea) to quiet your nerves?”

“No, thank you. Leave me now. You see how calm I am.”

* * * * *

Claudio had for a long time been seated before his desk in deep thought, when he suddenly heard a noise close by. He raised his eyes, and saw standing before him the meddlesome Chona, who had entered like a shadow, and was watching him attentively, with a mixture of pity and anger. Chona had come to have a very serious conference with Claudio; but she did not quite know what to say; nevertheless, she asked Heaven to loosen her tongue, and bestow upon her the gift of speech,—not such grotesque and vulgar speech as she gen-

erally used; but correct and adaptable to the noble reflections and beautiful things she had in her mind, and wanted to express.

When Claudio saw Chona, he frowned, and showed by his manner how much this visit displeased him, at the same time saying, severely: "What do you want here?"

"I have come to call you to account about my young mistress," answered Chona, quietly, "and I shall not go away until you have answered me." She then drew a chair near the table, and sat facing Claudio with coolness and effrontery.

Seeing there was no help for it, he restrained his anger, and in accents less harsh than before, said, "Say what you have to say."

"I have to say," returned Chona, "that you have treated my mistress wickedly; you have bewitched her. The poor angel is going to die. She neither sleeps nor eats, nor has a moment's peace, on account of you. Today she has done nothing but weep. She wouldn't even take a cup of *azahar* I wanted to give her, to quiet her nerves."

"Chona," returned Claudio, "leave me. Cease to torture me. Dost thou imagine the sacrifice I have already made is not a tremendous one? Anita should arm herself with fortitude, and make a similar one."

"You sacrifice voluntarily on the altar of this girl," replied Chona.

Claudio, confounded, did not know what answer to return to these arguments of Chona; besides, it was repugnant to him to discuss the metaphysics of love with a servant.

"Let us leave aside these idle discussions. I cannot cure the malady of your mistress. What would thou have me do?" asked Claudio.

"I will tell you what I would have you do," replied Chona, more gently and with insinuating accents. "If you cannot cure the malady of my mistress, you should at least alleviate it a little. Don't run away without saying good-bye. Come to see my mistress, who is sick. Do this work of mercy."

"What would be gained by such a visit? It would aggravate her malady, instead of curing it," said Claudio. "Chona, it will not do. You do not see the matter in its proper light."

"You will go and see her," pleaded Chona, and put some resignation into her soul, and if you tell her, in addition to this, that you love her and that it is only for the sake of God and to fulfill your vow that you are leaving her, her woman's vanity, at least, will not be wounded."

Claudio answered: "What you propose is dangerous for her and for me."

Chona replied: "And why should it be dangerous? God can see the rectitude of your intentions. Will He not grant you grace and His favor, that you may not yield to temptation? If she should

die of grief, at seeing herself scorned, I tell you your remorse would be harder to bear than the flames of pitch and sulphur that surround the cauldrons of Lucifer!"

"This is horrible. I will go to see her."

"May Heaven bless you, but my heart told me you would go."

"When do you wish me to go?"

"Tonight, at ten o'clock, precisely. I will be at the front door waiting for you, and will take you to her."

"Does she know you have been to see me?"

"She does not. It was all my own idea, but I will prepare her cautiously, so that the surprise and joy of your visit may not be too much for her."

"I will go. Good-bye."

"At ten o'clock, precisely. I will wait for you at the door." Saying which Chona hurried away, rejoicing at her diplomacy. She had gained her point.

Claudio was so beside himself under the influence of contradictory emotions which disputed the possession of his soul that, starting to his feet, he paced the floor like some wild animal. He needed nothing less than the immeasurable vaults of Heaven above, to elevate his thoughts. Impelled by this necessity, he took his hat, and, avoiding

everyone he knew, started towards the hill, his favorite resort.

He came to that hallowed spot where he had suffered such agony of soul, coupled with that ravishing moment of sweetness and bliss, when he had held his beloved for one moment in his arms. For a moment, the thought held him enthralled, as he pictured to himself the loveliness of the one he had so adored. Had his vain heart worshiped her above his Creator? If so, his punishment was just. But all those memories were harmful, and he prayed that all should hasten past.

Then, in the disturbance of his conscience, a sacred voice spoke: “Courage! forward with your cross!”

Turning back, he found himself in the midst of most enchanting surroundings. All this majestic beauty was his now; yet, all the earth, in this beautiful and tranquil night, seemed given up to melancholy reflections.

Engrossed in these meditations, he delayed his return, and was some distance from the *Rose de Castilla* when ten, the hour appointed for his interview with Anita, came. A feeling of intense physical pain attacked his heart; still he hastened, and presently found himself at the ranch. His heart began to beat with violence and he stopped a moment to recover his serenity.

CHAPTER XIV.

“I DESERVE DEATH, I DESIRE IT!”



CLAUDIO entered the hall. Chona was awaiting him. She seized him by the arm and she continued to go forward, dragging him by the arm after her. Claudio, who from a child had been accustomed to the respect and consideration of the servants, dependants and others around him in his parents' home, who gratified his every wish, and who had never been opposed in anything, but, on the contrary, humored and flattered, felt indignant, surprised and chagrined at Chona's insolent manner. Nevertheless, he controlled himself and remained silent.

Meanwhile, they crossed the courtyard, passed through the corridor, and arrived at last at the door of the library, opening which and announcing him, “Here is Don Claudio, who has come to say *adios*.” Chona discreetly withdrew.

She had told Anita that Claudio was coming to take his leave and Anita was weeping, but quickly dried her tears, began to make herself ready to receive him.

The interview began in the most grave and ceremonious manner. Both found it difficult to express themselves, but there was nothing else to do but make the effort.

Anita began: "I had already given up hope that you would come."

"Father Salvidea and I came; we were told that you were ill, and I have sent every day since to inquire for you. I was greatly pleased to learn you were improving. I hope that you are better."

"I am much better, thank you."

"My adieus now must be perhaps final."

Anita's habit of concealing her feelings, which served as a restraint to the paroxysms of grief and passion, had no power with her now. Thus, on this occasion, she would speak with frankness. Still, with a palpitating heart that swept aside all thought of maidenly reserve, and spurred on by the exigency of the hour, she exclaimed: "Claudio!"

But breathless, she stopped. What was she going to say to him? She paused for a moment, and forced herself to be calm.

"Claudio," she repeated, "I am going to make a supreme effort to speak to you frankly. Those terrible agonies I have experienced, and the serious reasoning I have forced myself to make during my illness, have changed me. I am no longer like the timid gazelle. I have been encompassed by the pangs of death. Can you not see that you in going to the fulfillment of your vow will offer a bloodless sacrifice, and will pitilessly sacrifice her who most loves you?"

“I, too, Anita,” returned Claudio, endeavoring to conquer his emotions, “have suffered. But since God in His mercy heard my soul-rending prayer for your deliverance, I have sought to die to myself; to free, not only my senses, but even my soul itself from earthly affection, in order to fulfill that most sacred and solemn vow. Now you upbraid me. In doing so, you forget yourself. O, Anita, forgive me! I loved you before I saw you. In a vision of my dream there arose in my soul the faithful image of the living beauty, which is the essence of that soul which is above all the dreams of my imagination, and the reality such as I beheld in you, enthroned itself. Long before I saw you, I was conscious of loving you. I loved you. There may be something mysterious, something supernatural in this.”

“I, too, believe that I loved you before I saw you. I had a presentiment, when they told me you had arrived at the mission. If love is as you say, I have died to myself, and live only in you and for you. I have prayed to the Virgin Mary to blot your image from my soul, and my prayer has been in vain. Your love must be protected by vigorous and lofty thoughts, a love that I am neither worthy of, nor capable of sharing, nor even able to understand.

“Anita, it is not that your love is less than mine, but that it is free from obligation, and mine is not.

The love you have inspired is profound, but my obligations, my vows, contend against it.”

“I deserve death, I desire it! My father pronounced the sentence on me, in his violent desire that I should do his bidding. He traded me, as it were. My rule of conduct, then, was to obey my parents blindly. Now I wish to die. And my spirit, set free, will follow you, invisible, by your side.”

Swiftly the picture came back to his mind,—of the child-like face uplifted to his, as she said: “Claudio, in this life and after death my love will still abide.” His eyes softened as the scene came before him.

“But in this life, it cannot be,” continued Anita, “I love thee not only in the soul, but thy very shadow, thy name, and all that goes to make thee such as thou art, Claudio Lopez. I repeat, that thou kill me, kill me, without compassion.”

“Anita, don’t,” Claudio said, his upturned face eloquent with appeal. “You forget that you, on that eventful day, charged me to keep my vow; for the consequence of breaking such a vow would be fatal to my soul, and now thou wouldst have me break it.”

“Yes, yes. But I am a Christian no longer. I am a material idolator.”

Here she made a long pause, tears bathing her cheeks. Becoming calmer and drying her eyes, she

looked at him and saw the expression of strength and self-reliance, raised and dignified by supreme self-mastery.

“By this just contempt, thou wilt kill me,” she cried, “more surely than with a dagger.” And with a stifled cry she turned away.

Startled by the passionate words “thou wilt kill me”, he looked at her and saw before him a miracle of transformation, from the child-like face to the face of a woman, radiant, with eyes full of fire. The noble hauteur of her pale brow, the dignity of her bearing, her grace, and charm, wrung admiration from his heart and stirred the very depths of his soul. His heart yearned for her; all, all was forgotten; for his love, the strongest of human elements, dominated and swept all before him; yet he could not break his vow, nothing but unhappiness and disaster would be their lot under the shadow of a broken vow.

Who could comprehend Claudio’s hard temptation? Who could blame him if he fell? But with an immense effort, his will mastering his desire, he murmured, “Anita, farewell, forever!” and took her hand, touching it with his lips.

“Stay, I plead thee, Claudio, and finish the work thou hast begun. I vow I’ll not cross thy path,” said Anita, as she left him.

Everything was still at the *Rosa de Castilla*,

save the murmur of the fountain in the garden, and the faint echo of music and song in the servants' quarters in celebration of *El Dia de San Juan*, as Claudio stepped out into the courtyard and made his way to where Chona was waiting to let him out.



CHAPTER XV.

"TO THE MEMORY OF THEE, SANTA ANITA."

TO Anita, alone in her room when the last notes in the servants' quarters had died away and she had dismissed Chona, despair and oppression returned redoubled. Finally, exhausted, she fell into a restless sleep.

Next morning she awoke heavy-hearted. A strange presentment possessed her, and the darkened walls and ceiling and floor seemed fairly to close in upon, to hedge in, soul and brain. It was the first time the girl had felt the need, the driving desire, to be alone, out of doors, where there was nothing but sky and space to bind her thoughts.

At last, when her restlessness became unbearable and whilst the remainder of the household were still asleep, she arose, dressed hurriedly, and went out to order a not-too-wide-awake page to saddle

her horse. She rode hard, at first, but shortly, pulling up her horse to a walk, turned toward the hills.

Anita's presence upon that hill that morning was unpremeditated. Even though she turned her mount into that mountain bridle path, the choice had been made without actual thought of the road which she was selecting, and yet unconsciously the choice had brought her to the place for which both brain and spirit were ahunger,—to the scenes which held such poignant memories; the cove in the hillside where, under that great projecting rock, he had found her, the vision of his dream, on that memorable morning. She stopped her horse. An impulse came to her,—a swift and blind desire to climb to the summit of that rock,—and she finally succeeded in doing so after much effort.

As she stood on the summit, everything else for the moment forgotten, she tried to recall the gentleness of his hands when he was fastening her cloak beneath her chin as the evening dews were making the air chill on the day of the picnic, when they were waiting for the rest of the party who had strayed away and he was begging her to let him take her home before it became too dark. Again, she felt his arms around her, as they were saying their last adieus, as they both thought, and hundreds of other sweet and tender memories pass-

ed before her. And when the later morning found her still standing there, surveying the beauty of the scene below,—peace and silence,—within her bosom a fierce storm raged.

“Hope deserts me; dark seems the future,” she mused. “Farewell, dear love! Since thou wilt need be gone, mine eyes do show me my life is almost done.”

Chona had taken a cup of chocolate to her mistress’ room, as usual, but found she had risen, and was much alarmed, for she had never before known Anita to leave the house alone. Chona had her horse saddled, and hurried away. As she came well within sight of the rocky point, she saw Anita standing on the very edge of the rock.

“Anita!” she cried, in alarm. The girl gave a step backwards, raised her arms, and fell over the ragged edge onto the boulders below.

At the sight, Chona became paralyzed with terror, but recovering herself, rushed to the spot and found her mistress unconscious. Finding herself helpless to aid her, she hurried back to the house and gave the alarm.

Anita’s father, who was just about to leave, was the first to learn of the terrible accident. He rushed with all speed to the spot, and with a groan that shook his tall frame, bent over his child and moaned her name: “Anita, Anita, *nina mia, mi*

vida, speak to thy father," and kissed her brow over and over again. He lifted her tenderly in his arms, courteously declining all offers of assistance from friends and neighbors, who had hurried to the scene on learning of the accident. His haggard and set look told, plainer than words, the awful agony he was suffering. Yet, he was possessed of that calmness which comes to brave men in supreme moments.

Some of the neighbors, nevertheless, hastened to summon Father Salvidea, others to acquaint Claudio with the sad news. Claudio immediately hastened to the house, arriving just as Anita's father came, bearing his precious burden, senseless, in his arms.

Claudio turned back, as he felt a dizziness overcome him, remaining on the veranda. Presently Father Salvidea came out.

"Father, father, is she dead?" he cried.

"No, not dead," said Father Salvidea, "thank God." Then he looked about him, as if he had suddenly wakened from a deep sleep. "Will you let me know how,—how," but Claudio could not proceed.

"You shall know soon," Father Salvidea said. "But you must go in the house and lie down," he continued, as he noted Claudio's pale and drawn features.

“I will obey you, father,” said Claudio, as he staggered in and fell into a seat.

He did not know how long he had remained there, when he heard his name called, and was told that Anita wished to see him.

With an effort, he recovered his composure, and was soon at her bedside, crying, “My beautiful Anita, my life, my love, if it were only me!”

“No, Claudio,” said she. “The mission, the country, need you. Promise me, Claudio *mio*, thou wilt stay and finish the work thou has performed so worthily.”

Her voice was low, yet clear and sweet, as she continued: “Always a worthy son of thy noble sire, thou must be.”

“I promise,” he said, and stooping over, he took her little hands in his own, pressing them to his heart with mingled tenderness and reverence, and kissed them again and again.

“If I have performed my duty worthily, thou wast my inspiration, beloved,” he said.

Anita was enraptured by Claudio’s restoration to her. “The Lord in His mercy has granted me this delight,” she said; “for He has brought thee to my side again like thy dear old self. Claudio *mio*, do you remember when, on one of our happy rambles over the hills, we said our love was immortal? Beloved, my love, after death, will live on, forever.”

Claudio glanced into Anita's eyes, and she smiled sweetly and said: "I know I am going. I am ready to go. My soul is at peace with my Creator. Father Salvidea has given me his blessing. And you have made it joyous, with your love."

Anita's strength was rapidly departing, and the death she craved was near at hand, but she continued: "I complain not of my fate. Heaven has willed it so."

Claudio bent down and reverently kissed the girl's brow. On her face a great beauty shone, as her glorious spirit ascended Heavenward amidst a luminous silvery cloud.

Anita's father and mother knelt by her bedside, the mother with ashen-pale lips, and the father with majestic form, shrunken by his heavy sorrow. Chona was frantic.

Claudio stood and gazed for a moment on his beloved's fair brow, and then turned to Father Salvidea, in agonized tones crying: "Father, father, I want to follow her spirit beyond! Is there a way, father?"

"No, Claudio," replied the good father, "God has work for you to do. You have been called to labor in your Master's vineyard, my son, and when God calls you to His fold, you will join her pure spirit above."

A great sigh escaped Claudio's lips, as Father

Salvidea was speaking, and a rush of scalding tears blinded his eyes. With a great sob of agony, his head fell forward into his folded arms.

Father Salvidea walked towards him, and gently laying his hands on his head said: "Never did a purer soul ascend to its Creator. My son, dedicate that beautiful domain, the reward of your labor, as a monument to her memory."

Inspired by the reverend father's words, Claudio arose, and said: "Would that I could raise to her a monument of gold. This domain, the bountiful gift of my gracious king of Spain. I dedicate to the memory of thee, Santa Anita."

BOOK II.

CHAPTER I.

THESE AND OTHER PAGES



THE following and other pages of his diary were found in one of the rooms of Don Claudio's Santa Anita ranch house after his death. There were many others, but these were selected, because they pertain to the story, at the time of the secularization of the Missions:

“April the fourth—Now my thoughts have long been wandering from my diary before me to this gloom and desolation. Is this the end of our hopes, this the end of long years of arduous labor and sacrifices? What will be the end of all this? The palsying thought, indeed, takes possession of my soul; I tremble at the approach of every horseman, fearing news of fresh depredations; the very air seems noxious with debauchery and crime.

“April the eighth—The faithful neophites who remain send appealing messages to me for help. It pierces me to the soul; for alas! I deplore my inability to subdue this wild whirlpool of crimes; yet I must act with the noble and reverend Father de Salvidea, with courage, pity and love.

“California, the treasured child of Spain, nour-

ished by goodness, wisdom, truth, and all that is divine; and to whom many of her pious subjects gave so generously of their gold to help in the work of civilization; and to me sacred with memories of the past, is taken possession of by Mexico, whose rulers are despoiling and debauching her to their greed.

“April twenty-eighth—Father de Salvidea endeavors to rouse me from the gloom into which I have fallen. He tells me that as a knight of the cross I must not waste the rest of my life in selfish brooding. With God’s help I will do his bidding.

“Father Almighty, I pray Thee, help me to lift my thoughts above worldly cares and passions; give me strength to bear my sorrows!”

“May the first—I often see Father de Salvidea’s cowed figure, stately and dignified, pacing the veranda in the courtyard of the mission, praying that God may subdue his proud spirit, that he might humbly submit to the rule of the Sacatecas Friars, who were sent from Mexico as his superiors. ‘His superiors,’ ah! what mockery! His poor heart, too, is racked with pain at the continuance of things which he has not the power to alter; yet, I often have seen him by the side of a dying neophyte who was stricken in the turmoil, administering the last sacraments with the same mild and loving look; yet he looked in agony on those who

stood near by those painful scenes, as if warning them of a like fate.

“May the third—The face of revelry is torpid in the shadow of the night. Who knows what the morrow will bring. Nothing but heart-rending scenes. I must away, where at least I can find peace; there is nothing for me here,—nothing! And yet, am I so distracted, so lacking courage, that I would flee from the scenes of pain and horror. Still, this inaction I cannot endure; it is unbearable. I will wait yet a little longer.

“May the fifth—Father Salvidea tells me it is best to store the art treasures that are in the salons and the guest rooms, These were sent to him by friends and relations (people of great wealth) for the purpose of cheering him in this wild and far-away land.

“May the sixth—Today I have, with my own hands, stored away Father de Salvidea’s art treasures,—treasures which would delight a nation; carefully each painting was laid away,—some of the paintings by old masters. My eyes lingered long on the Gobelin Tapestry which alone would grace a King’s gallery. The solid silver service, presented to him by his king, his manuscripts,—which will be his noblest monuments,—volumes of rare works, statuary, etc., I put away; and some of my own trinkets, manuscripts and valuable documents, I stored together with his. After the work

of storing is finished I will move to my Santa Anita ranch, and there await results.

“May the tenth—In vain I try to sleep. All that has happened in the past years come rushing into my fevered brain. I will dress me and walk in the open air; I will find peace in the calm of the wooded hills.

“Never was a night so still; never a sky so deeply blue. A star of rare brilliancy comes twinkling over the tree tops; how beautiful, how grand! My spirit is filled with the grandeur of the scene around me; the exceeding loveliness and beauty of it all. To me it is fragrant with the memory of the brightest hours of my life. Yet I must leave thee, Paradise; thus leave thee, dear land, happy walks and shadows. Anita, beloved, it is vain to ask thee, for I know thou canst not hear; yet my prayer will be heard and will carry my message to thee. I pray in my longing for a sign.

“The leaves of the oak, at hand, stirred and fluttered in a gentle breeze. In the meantime a voice was heard by me, so softly, in a whisper—‘Go! It is your destiny!’ Is this thy spirit, my angel? The answer, so sure, so clear, ‘Yes’, I am convinced; all my doubts are swept away, absolute peace possesses my soul; so that it strengthens me. A strange quietness steals over me; so, with my spirit strengthened I will once more to

my bed and repose. Tomorrow—or is it today?— I will speak to Father de Salvidea of my resolve.

“May the twentieth—Today I consulted with Father de Salvidea in reference to my wish to remove to Los Angeles. A smile of strange sadness clouded his face as he said: ‘Go, my son, but oh! do not let thy trust in God weaken. Our labors will yet bear fruit; we may not see it; but it will come, though it may be one hundred years coming. Thou wilt still be near us; Los Angeles is only nine miles distant; should we need thee, we will send a messenger.’”



CHAPTER II.

DON CLAUDIO MOVES TO LOS ANGELES

JUNE the first — Farewell, San Gabriel, thou splendor of an earthly Paradise; I leave thee now, to enter another life. My life is of no more use here.

“I leave now the scenes of my youthful love. I love and hold sacred every path, every trail, thy blessed feet have trod, Anita. Here where thy winsome child-face was upturned to mine, that glance, that glorious smile flashed into my soul; my heart spoke its love and you promised to be mine, O that, my happiest day! and again on that same, never-to-be-forgotten day, when thy soft,

dark, earnest eyes uplifted to the pale moon above, and with a sweet expression on thy pensive face thou saidst, 'what will our world be a hundred years from now?' I, with the ardour of my youth, fired by thy inspiration, spoke the ambitions of my heart.

"Years of vain toil and care have passed; yet I complain not. To have known and loved thee, Anita, and the cause for which I worked is my solace and my recompense. Here, at the foot of thy monument, I do avow I have striven to do thy bidding, when, with thy last breath, thou didst charge me to remain and continue the work I had begun. I promised thee then; with a smile of perfect happiness, mirrored on thy tranquil beauty, thy pure spirit passed away in a glowing cloud to our Father's home on high. Oh! Is there any misery to be compared to my continual grief? Here, in the calm beauty of the hills, under the dome of heaven, is thy monument, Anita, dedicated to thy memory, to me the dearest and holiest spot on earth. Santa Anita, farewell!"

Don Claudio moved about, giving orders for the packing, with an undercurrent of agitation and sadness, unseen in his face, step, motion or gesture. The grief he felt at leaving his beloved San Gabriel and his Santa Anita home would have been his undoing, but for a thing bigger than himself, a passion to do big things. In Los Angeles,

he soon gathered an army of men and set them to planting orchards and vineyards, erected several buildings; and still found time to often ride to San Gabriel, rendering to Father de Salvidea what aid he could.

FOUR YEARS AFTER

“Father de Salvidea tells me,” Don Claudio recorded, “that at Anita’s death my vow was fulfilled; therefore, I will give my life to a purpose,—that of making another happy. Because Maria Louisa, a gentle and lovely girl, truly loves me, I will make her my wife. She knows my sorrow, and is willing to share my gloomy life. This love, bestowed upon me, I will cherish, and, with all my soul, I pray that I may make this trustful girl happy. Yet thy memory I will venerate, Anita, thou glorious vision of my youth.”

Some time after, Don Claudio was married to Maria Louisa Coto, a cousin of Anita’s, and, like Anita, a beautiful girl with blue eyes and golden hair. He apparently lived in contentment the rest of his life.

Don Claudio sat on the veranda of his Los Angeles home, watching the same eternal sun, declining into the evening frame of the misty clouds arising from the Pacific, his mind dwelling on the world he had left behind beyond the Atlantic.

Memories came trooping back of the pleasures of his gay, frivolous, yet happy youth; and, on this side of the Atlantic, the strange adventures and years of useless toil. What would be the ultimate destiny of this land in which he toiled? While no thought of the end was in his mind that evening, yet he was not without some presentment of the closing scene. Thus he sat pondering, when he heard the fast thumping of hoofs. The next moment a horseman halted before him, his horse in a lather of sweat. He quickly dismounted and handed Don Claudio a letter. "A pressing message from Father Sanchez," he said. Don Claudio seized the letter, opened and read it. Springing up, he read and reread it with straining eyes, walked forward a few steps, and then turning to the messenger said:



CHAPTER III.

A HURRIED SUMMONS TO SAN GABRIEL



TELL Juan to saddle two of my speediest horses and bring them up without delay!" This done, he mounted, and ordered his man to follow. The steeds broke into a fast run toward the mission.

The letter said in part: "Every vestige of restraint on the part of the rioters has vanished.

They have set fire to the store rooms. Your presence might avert a great peril that threatens."

The serious alarm, which Father Sanchez' letter aroused, possessed Don Claudio. It filled him with consternation. The unveiled peril, that he was called to avert, what was it? Great heavens! Would he reach the mission in time before the fire reached the storerooms? For a moment despair seized his soul, and the thin columns of smoke, rising over the hills, promised but a ray of hope. He urged his foaming horse to a faster run, and, dizzy with anxiety, neared the mission. A wail of instruments, wild and discordant, fell upon his ears as he approached. The revelry roared louder. Threats, half in earnest and half jocular, were heard above the clamor.

The Padres' voices, lifted loud, were strained, as if striving to be heard above the uproar. Shrieks and ribald laughter pierced the air. Without a word or an instant's hesitation, Don Claudio plunged through the rioters and stopped before the ruined wall of the storeroom. Leaping from his horse and throwing the reins to his man, he walked around the wall to the spot where he had stored Father de Salvidea's art treasures, rare works, and priceless manuscripts. (These were a great loss to mankind, as Father de Salvidea was known to be a literary genius.) Also his own (Don Claudio's) manuscripts, documents and

grants, which had been stored in the same place. He stood for a moment, looking at the broken fragments of iron-clamped chests that remained above the ashes. A cry of horror escaped his dry lips. Suddenly he raised his hand to his forehead, and fell prostrate. Father Sanchez was instantly summoned. He hurried to the prostrate form, and, without a word, dropped to his knees, thrust his hand under the vest and felt Don Claudio's heart. It was beating, but weakly. The good Father administered the last rites of the Church. Very tenderly Don Claudio was lifted, carried into the priest's house, and laid upon a couch.

A murmur spread in every direction among the rioters,—a murmur that was little more than a whisper; "Don Claudio had dropped dead!" The half-maddened, murderous rioters halted in their surprise. A panic seized them as the news reached them. They were just in the atrocious act of setting fire to the altar, as a preliminary to destroying the holy vestments and pictures, and demolishing the church. In horror and superstitious fear, the terrified rioters crept close to one another, but when Don Claudio was borne by they parted to right and left, bared their heads, and folded their arms. Don Claudio had been their idol in times gone by. A few of the more vicious howled their disappointment, and raged at being cheated of blood and spoil, and wished to continue; but the

more temperate soon overcame them, and quiet reigned again.


Don Claudio expired the second day following the attack—January the first, 1833—without regaining consciousness, and was buried inside the church under the holy water fount.

“We tell thy doom without a sigh;
For thou art freedom’s now and fame’s;
One of the few, the immortal names
That were not born to die;
A life of honor and of worth
Has no eternity on earth.”



CHAPTER IV.

FATHER SANCHEZ' ADDRESS TO THE NEOPHITES

HERE lies the remains of Don Claudio, your kind and gentle master. He came to you in the vigor of his youth and gave the remainder of his life to you, teaching you the arts and industries which you now know. He strove to make you self-supporting, and of value to the community as well as to yourselves.

“Now while yet in the vigor of his manhood, you rioters have killed him; killed your benefactor just as sure as if each one of you had plunged your dagger into his noble heart.

“The scenes and atrocities which took place in this mission two days ago; the anguish it caused him like a dagger, I know, pierced his true heart; and in mortal sorrow died, one of the noblest among men, our best loved Don Claudio.”

Father Sanchez' voice broke with a sob; men, women, and children moaned out pitifully. Father Sanchez, composing himself, waited until they were calm, then continued:

“Be comforted, my children, for even now his spirit, in pity, may be looking down on you, praying, pleading, for you, even as our Saviour did on the cross, ‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.’

“Ours, my children, is no common bereavement. The chain which linked our hearts to his gifted spirit has been suddenly snapped, and death has taken from among us the wisest and most revered. How sudden, how mysteriously! for it was but yesterday many of you saw him ride by in the fulness of vigor and health.

“Stilled now, is the heart of him who but yesterday was the seat of loving solicitude for us; whose persuasive words we have so often and so lately heard. Whom can we appeal to now, for aid in days of turmoil and trial, when lies there cold, he who with his death stilled the horrors of yesterday? Oh, the unspeakable horror of that day, the death stroke of noble Claudio! Now, his

spirit mingles with the army of martyrs who have gone before!

“What monument can you erect to him, who dedicated the best of his life to you? Some symbol of his love for you? This I know would be his dearest wish: Erect a lasting monument to him in your hearts, so you may treasure his memory. Avoid your past errors, and forget not the virtues he taught you. Choose the Saviour for your support in temptation, and, when your hour comes, he will meet you and lead you to receive the reward which is the promise of God to the faithful. Pray earnestly for his soul, that he may speedily receive the crown he so richly deserves. Tomorrow he shall be placed to rest in the consecrated spot of this church, which he helped to erect,—this shall be his tomb.”

Father Sanchez paused, and with a lingering look at the still, pale face, walked out. His heart was breaking, however, for he died just two weeks from the day of Don Claudio's death, apparently through grief. Father Sanchez was buried at the foot of the altar in the presbytery, January 17, 1833.

Don Claudio's death saved the further destruction of the mission, and possibly many lives. It is affirmed, in just tribute to his memory, that the Indians never attempted another demonstration of violence against the mission. Knowing the

grandeur of the man, he formed a power in their lives. The neophites cherished his memory even to idolatry.



CHAPTER V.

CLAUDIO LOPEZ, A PIONEER OF CIVILIZATION

DON CLAUDIO was the first white man to school the Indians in the civilized arts and industries of Europe in the locality now known as Pasadena. He ruled that vast army of Indians under his command with strict, yet kindly discipline. They revered him and served him with respect. His word was law to them. Always moderate in words and action, he demanded strict obedience to his orders. Any deviation from that rule, was punished by incarceration, but never with the lash. His orders to his task masters were, "See that they do their work well; but, mind ye, no lashes."

At the Mission of San Gabriel it was one of Don Claudio's duties to receive and entertain visitors of note. The guests were wont to ask whence came this young man so cultured, so charming. He received the greatest respect, even from his superiors; for, in the heat of discussion, he was moderate, but convincing. The wisdom which stamped

his views carried great weight with all superiors and dependents. In his handsome face dignity and goodness were combined. The sorrow which clung to him, he had never been able to shake loose. It could often be perceived in his melancholy glances. Yet, how he was honored by his fellow men, and with what reliance they looked to him for guidance, as one looks to friend or master!

Surely there have been verified the prophetic words of the noble Father de Salvidea when, in consoling Cloudia in his depressed moods, he would say, "My son, our labors will yet bear fruit. We may not see it, but it will come, though it be a hundred years coming."

Great rejoicing must be for Don Claudio, if, with his spiritual eyes, he beholds the wonderful development which has come in the land he loved so well and for which he stood sponsor, when, under his supervision, ground was broken, for the first time, for the planting of trees and vines and for the sowing of seed.

Traces of his handiwork still exist in an old mill, now carefully guarded as one of the earliest landmarks, where a somber yet beautiful and peaceful gloom pervades. Trees, gnarled with age, still survive. A lordly pine stands near the door, with its top slightly leaning towards it, as if on watch; its mournful attitude conveying the memory of the mortal sorrow and untimely death

of Don Claudio Lopez, its architect. There is an indescribable charm about this spot. Homes of matchless beauty and magnificence are adjacent to the mill; homes of people, who could have chosen any district in the world for fertility, climate and beauty, yet decided on this spot.

Claudio would now see that his life's work had not been in vain. How consoling to know that the mill has been conserved by noble-hearted people who have stayed the desolating hand of time and caused its presence to breathe an essence more exquisite than the perfume of the roses which still blossom on the corner of the old mill.

One is lost in reverie. May not this be the haunt of a gentle spirit whose life and whose appreciation of the beautiful in nature and in art draw it here? While thus musing the following lines from the pen of Kercheval, in his poem, "San Gabriel", come to mind:

SAN GABRIEL

"This is the spot of all earth's
Fondest dreams of Eden
Best by fairies loved, yet by
Fairies haunted;
Still o'er the scenes they loved so well
Lingers a dreamy glamour."

The whole scene, among those palatial homes, is that of richness, quietudes and miraculous extremes of culture, suggesting a new race of fairies in this enchanted circle.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER I.

RULE OF FRA JOSE MARIA DE SALVIDEA AT SAN GABRIEL MISSION

FRA JOSE MARIA DE SALVIDEA was born at Bibloa Vizcaya, Spain, on March 2, 1780. He received the habit of St. Francis on Dec. 13, 1798, and came to the college of San Fernando, Mexico, in September, 1804. He arrived in California in August, 1805, and was stationed at San Fernando in 1805 and at San Gabriel ni 1806-26. At San Juan Capistrano, 1826-42, and at San Luis Rey in 1842-46.

From the first he was regarded as one of the best and most zealous of the Fathers, as Priest, teacher and manager of the temporalities. His judgment and prudence had commanded the unanimous approbation of the Society for the high position he had enjoyed. He had all the intrepidity and resolution requisite for beginning and conducting the greatest enterprise. His wisdom and intellectual talent had gained for him universal esteem, which was heightened to veneration.

Father de Salvidea was in the flower of his splendid manhood when he took charge of the

ecclesiastical and temporal affairs of the San Gabriel Mission in the year of 1806. He was tall, stately and courteous. His complexion was fair and his face one of remarkable delicacy and refinement. History relates he was never known to have an enemy. His mind was vigorous like his body. He looked fearlessly at the face of the mighty task he undertook, which has been related in the beginning of our story. He surveyed the situation and measured the extent of his knowledge and understanding; then he looked for an assistant, and found an efficient and capable co-operator in Claudio Lopez. Both went body, soul and heart into the work of civilizing and christianizing the savages in this jurisdiction, instructing them in the industries of self-support, and establishing the affairs of the Mission in wealth and opulence.

Father de Salvidea had also a comfortable house, built just across the El Camino Real, west of the church, for the exclusive use of Claudio Lopez and for the accommodation of guests who should come to the Mission. It had spacious rooms, luxuriantly furnished, adorned with paintings,—some of them by the old masters,—genuine and great works of art. The entertainment of the guests was assigned to Don Claudio, he being a man of letters, courteous and affable.

Father de Salvidea mastered the Indian language, translating the church service into it, and preached to the Indians in their native tongue, "a grand specimen of his eloquence and ability."

By a noted historian: George Wharton James,* he was called the "Martinet of Missionaries". and, in truth, he might be called so; for his achievements attest this statement. Under his administration, together with the supervision of his major-domo, Claudio Lopez, the Mission of San Gabriel attained its maximum of prosperity. He brought the establishment and everything connected with it to the climax of perfection. He planted orchards and vineyards, and the gardens were a marvel of beauty. They were edged with Castilian rose bushes,—fountains, statuary, hour-dials, arbors and grottoes, fine walks shaded by fruit trees of every description, exotic shrubs and flowers, interspersed. Everything was in such perfect taste, that the effect was both harmonious and restful. He brought water from a long distance through cement pipes with which to irrigate gardens and orchards.

He remodeled the existent system of Government. Under his wonderful management, herds of cattle, horses and sheep increased to innumer-

* George Wharton James in his *History of the Missions*.

able numbers in a few years. According to Robinson's report, the Mission of San Gabriel had 12,000 cattle in 1814, twelve years after Father Salvidea took charge. It has been the custom, in current newspapers, to grossly exaggerate the wealth and prosperity of this Mission; though, doubtless, under the care of Father Salvidea it was wisely and systematically managed and prosperous. How can one imagine that a priest, loved and revered by the neophytes, could be guilty of such diabolic cruelty as some historians relate? It is a slander on that grand and holy man. The best and most equivocal proof is found in the unbounded affection invariably shown towards him by the neophytes. They venerated him like a father with a degree of devotion approaching adoration. In support of my argument I will quote, from Bartlett's report, the following:

"Five thousand Indians were at that time collected at the Mission of San Gabriel. They are represented to have been sober and industrious, well fed and clothed, and seemed to have experienced as high a state of happiness as they are adapted by nature to receive. These five thousand Indians constituted a large family of which the Padre was the social and religious, and we might say, political head. Living thus, this neglected race began to learn some of the fundamental principles of civilized life. The institution of mar-

riage began to be respected and blessed. The rites of religion grew to be so much considered, that deviations from its duties were somewhat infrequent occurrences. The girls, at their arrival at the age of womanhood, were separated from the rest of the population and taught the useful arts of sewing, weaving, carding, etc. The young men who showed talent for music were instructed in it. Some of them wrote their own music."



CHAPTER II.

THE DESPOILING OF THE MISSIONS

THE chief of the Ketchis of San Luis Rey told Bartlett that his tribe was large and that his people were happy when the good Padres were there to protect them; that they cultivated the soil, assisted in rearing large herds of cattle, were taught blacksmithing, carpentering, as well as other trades; that they had plenty to eat and were comfortably housed. Such was the happy state of the Indians under the missionaries. After the secularization they were scattered about without a home or protection, and were in a miserable starving condition.

"Is it not terrible," he continued, "to see wrested from us the Missions we have built, the herds that we have gathered by our care, and ourselves and

our families exposed to ill treatment and death itself?"

Forbes shows them reduced to poverty, plunged in vice, constantly in prison and a pest to the country, within a short time after the suppression of the Missions.

San Gabriel, once the hive of industries, rich in gold derived from the trading of its abundant resources, the toil of the neophites, from the numberless herd, and the boundless zeal, toil and sacrifices of our heroes,—all came to naught through the secularization, and, in the same degree that we admire those zealous heroes, we must stamp with ignominy the men and the policy which destroyed the work of the Missionaries and drove their inmates, the neophites, back to a state worse than barbarism.

Father de Salvidea was kind in the extreme to travelers and others. A splendid public table was spread daily at which he presided. Horses to ride were at the services of the guests; and good clean beds to sleep upon at night.

In fact, the government of the Mission San Gabriel was conducted by Father de Salvidea like a little principality; yet, whatever he planned and so grandly executed, the thought of the best interests of the Mission and the temporal and spiritual advancement of the neophites were paramount. He surrounded himself with the beauti-

ful things of nature and art. His elegance pervaded everything, which told their own story of a life begun in high spheres. History relates, that envy and jealousy stepped in and prevailed.

He was ordered by his superiors to the partially wrecked missions of San Juan Capistrano. However, Father de Salvidea obtained permission to remain at San Gabriel a while longer, which time lengthened to about four years. He had hoped that his influence among the neophytes might quell the abandonment into which they were falling.

Who can tell the long agony of spirit, the inexplicable anguish that he endured in the face of this catastrophe? It was at this juncture that Father de Salvidea, in a desperate extremity and with a courage that rose above the wreck of hope, wrote that admirable plea and petition in behalf of the Indians.



CHAPTER III.

FATHER DE SALVIDEA'S REMOVAL TO SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO

FINALLY, it became impossible for him to remain at San Gabriel any longer. To leave, and obey the order, which transferred him to San Juan Capistrano, he knew would cost him a struggle; yet he must obey.

Father de Salvidea stood looking at the garden

he had planted and had watched come into bloom, —the paths he had trodden when reading his breviary. He looked over at the mountains; there under the green and silent shade of the majestic oaks and pines were the haunts of many a meditating hour. With his noble form, shaken by emotion, and with a bleeding heart he bowed his head and departed, after having given twenty-eight years of his life to the service of the Mission. Fourteen years after the height of San Gabriel's epoch of prosperity and renown, conditions had changed at the Mission.

We have seen Father de Salvidea in the glory of his days; now his looks are no more lofty, nor his steps stately; the vigor of his intellect is gone. Of all that was gained in these years of ardent labors, nothing remained; only broken memories of the glory that was departed.

A few years later we see him again, as he stood leaning on his staff, tears overflowing from his breaking heart. He looks upon the destruction, now taking place, of all those years of sacrifice and patient, consecrated toil; for General Echandia, with other political intruders, wreckers of Spanish California, were encouraging the Indians, among whom anarchy prevailed, by flaunting equality in their faces, and by promising those simple people a share in the spoils.

Robbing and stabbings were the order of those

days. Drunken Indians, staggering along from the scenes of debauch ejaculated "*Soy Libre—Soy Libre!*"—"I am free—I am free!"

Such sights pierced the weary old padre to the heart, and the government did not and could not afford security to any condition of life, either within or without the Missions.

This knowledge, and the fierceness of his losing struggles, filled the padre's eyes with tears, and made him sad, even at the sight of San Gabriel's hills and valleys, gay with flowers and the clear sweet air in their mingled perfume. In the midst of this beauty, peaceful and secure stands his beloved San Gabriel, shining in the pale light, its noble *fachada*, its bell tower, its noble cross, outlining themselves against the clear and peaceful sky. Often he walked on the crest of the hills and often he stopped to rest, his abstracted gaze riveted in the far-away beginning of all those things.



CHAPTER IV.

THE PASSING OF A NOBLE SOUL

WHEN sick unto death, he refused to quit San Luis Rey, where he believed his services to be needed; but finally it was thought best to remove him to San Juan, where he could have better care. A cart was prepared, with

all possible conveniences, by advice of Father A. Oliva and A. Lorenzana, who had nursed him for some days.

The night before the journey was to be made Father de Salvidea died, much regretted by all who knew his worth and gigantic intellect. The exact date of his death is not known, but it was apparently early in 1846. He was buried in the Mission San Luis Rey at the left of the altar.

Many years have passed; but San Gabriel Mission still stands, in all its pristine beauty; but in its surroundings another race now dwells. Here and there, in humble dwellings, still remain a few natives, whose fathers never tire of repeating the story of the great but silent Don Claudio and the saintly Father de Salvidea.

We cannot refrain from copying the following adaptation of lines from Longfellow for the sake of the interest they inspire.

“Rise again, ye shapes and shadows of the past,
Rise from your long-forgotten graves:
Let us behold your face;
Let us hear the words of wisdom you uttered in
 those days of yore;
Revisit your familiar haunts again,
The scenes of triumph, the scenes of care and pain,
And leave the footprints of your bleeding feet
Once more upon the Camino Real!”

Should those noble men be forgotten, who, without a thought of profit or gain or self-aggrandizement, gave their lives with heroic devotion to the cause of Christianity and Civilization? Should we not, with sculptored figures, perpetuate their names and rehearse their virtues to the passing traveler?

We fear, that by setting before the eyes of our readers recitals of misfortunes, which overtook persons of highest quality and lofty aims, we will, of necessity, weaken our faith in the fruits of self-sacrifice; but let us hope that it cannot fail to be significant in example and inspiration. These noble men accepted their fate as soldiers of God, Christianity and Civilization.

They were good and great in what they were and did; and great, too, in the wrongs and misfortunes which befell, even as an oak, crashing in storm or by axe, on the hillside is still great,—is still oak.

We may well believe, that the closing scene for Father de Salvidea was full of tranquillity, hope and faith; and, that he, who had given his life to so great and holy a purpose, and who had passed through deep worldly trials and sorrows, should rest at last in the peace which passeth all understanding.

“Spread out earth’s holiest records here,
Of days and deeds which scattered wide and
free
The golden seeds of bright and loving truth,
Whose harvests multiply, whose fruits forever
more must be.”
So, great soul, consecrated and faithful life—

Requiescat in Pace.

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